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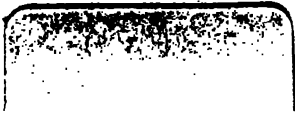
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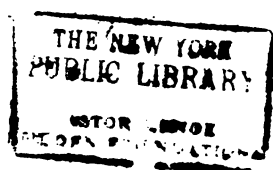
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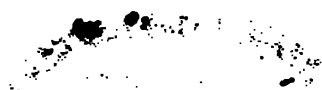
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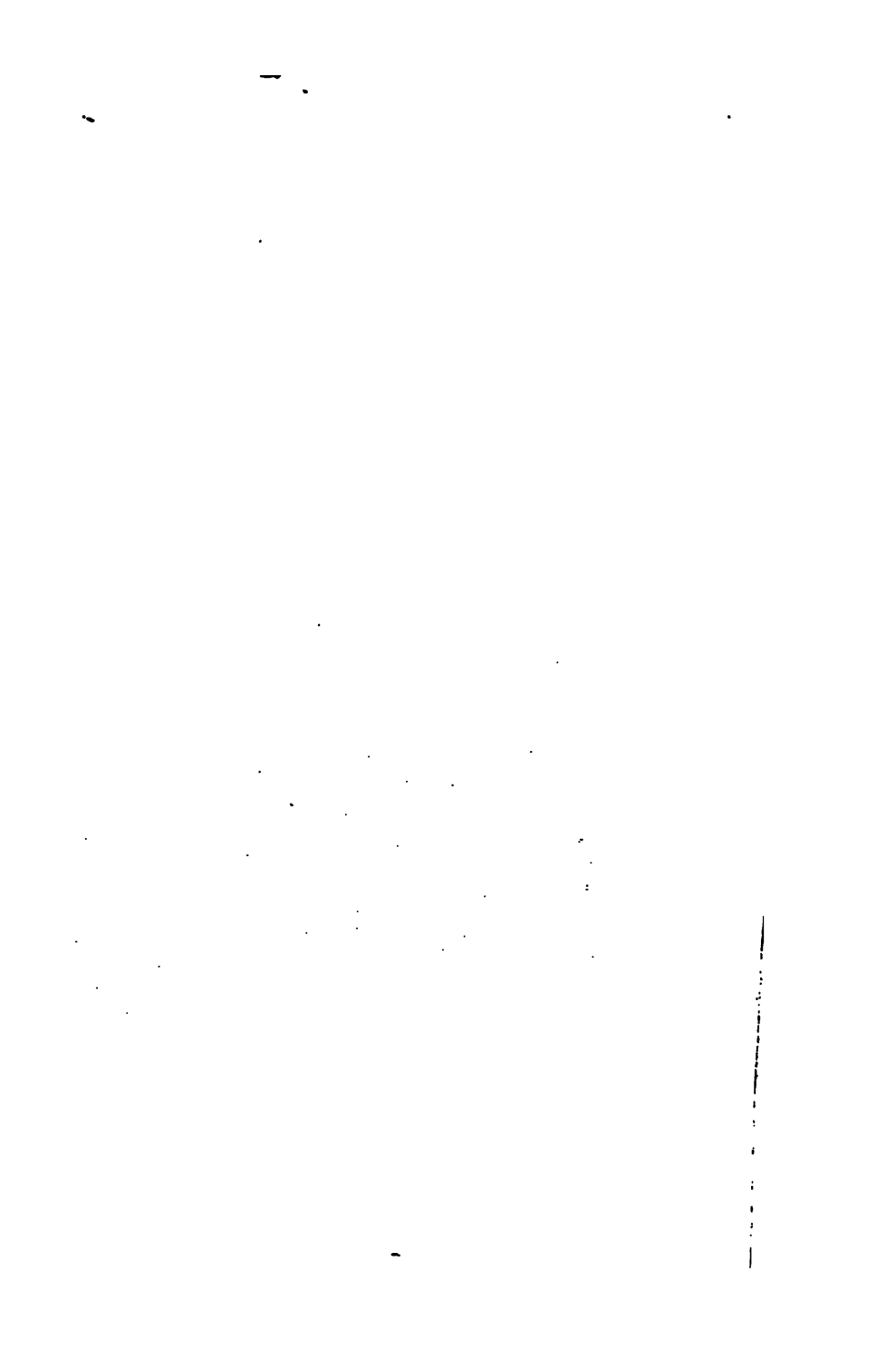


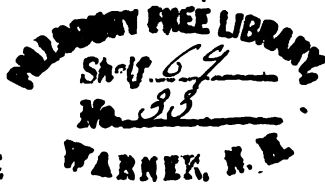
LOS ANGELES

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LOS ANGELES

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LOUISIANA LOWLANDS

A SKETCH OF PLANTATION LIFE, FISHING AND
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AND OTHER TALES.

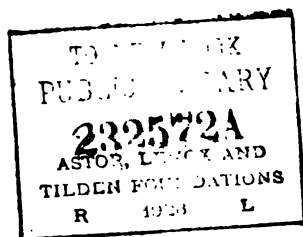
BY
FRED MATHER
("KEGO-E-KAY").

AUTHOR OF "MEN I HAVE FISHED WITH," "ADIRONDACK
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Just a Word About It.....	vii
The Opening Chorus.....	ix
"In the Louisiana Lowlands".....	x
CHAPTER I.	
The Natchitoches.	i
CHAPTER II.	
At the Lake.....	16
CHAPTER III.	
A Hospitable Southern Home.....	36
CHAPTER IV.	
A Bear Hunt.....	53
CHAPTER V.	
Spinning Yarns.	68
CHAPTER VI.	
"Shuckin' ob de Cawn".....	83
CHAPTER VII.	
Fishing for Crappies.....	97
CHAPTER VIII.	
Shooting in the Berry Patch.....	106
CHAPTER IX.	
Down the Atchafalaya.....	121

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	PAGE.
CHAPTER X.	
A Short Cut Home.....	139
CHAPTER XI.	
"Hurry Up Dem Mules".....	158
CHAPTER XII.	
On the Tangipahoa.....	175
CHAPTER XIII.	
Fishing with a Bow and Arrow.....	189
CHAPTER XIV.	
On Bistineau Lake.....	206
CHAPTER XV.	
A Gander Pull in Arkansaw.....	223
CHAPTER XVI.	
An Arkansaw Turkey Shoot.....	244
CHAPTER XVII.	
Around the Camp-Fire.....	259
Frank's Story.	268
The Paymaster's Story.....	272
The Major's Story.....	277
CHAPTER XVIII.	
Catching an Octopus.....	279
CHAPTER XIX.	
Some Virginia Men and Fish.....	295
CHAPTER XX.	
Cooking a Trout in Camp.....	314

JUST A WORD ABOUT IT.

It has been said that "nobody reads a preface." Therefore I will not attempt one, but I do want to say a word about these stories—just a word.

They were written for *Forest and Stream* and caught the fancy of so many of its readers that they asked to have them put in book form, and here they are!

The sketches entitled "In the Louisiana Lowlands" are founded on incidents which happened while I was collecting fishes for the Smithsonian Institution and the United States Fish Commission, which were under the direction of the late Prof. Spencer F. Baird.

All of the other Louisiana sketches were merely continuations of experiences on the trip after I left the hospitable mansion of Col. B., whose natural animosity to me as a Federal officer during the Civil War had been overcome.

F. M.

THE OPENING CHORUS.

The performers enter, form a circle in front of their chairs, bow, and are seated. The interlocutor puts his knuckles on his knees, with elbows well to the front, and inquires of "Bones" in a well-modulated voice: "Well, Mr. Johnson, how are you feeling this evening?" After the answer, and the question is repeated to "Tambo" and also answered, he then announces: "We will now have the overture." This is in turn followed by the "Opening Chorus," which is here published by permission of The Oliver Ditson Co., of Boston, Mass., owners of the copyright.

IN THE LOUISIANA LOWLANDS.

Allegretto.



1. Way down in Loui - si - an - na, not ma - ny years a - go, There
 2. One night, old Pom - py start - ed off, to play for Con - ser - Gum, But a -
 3. Says he, old chap, just move a - long or else I'll spoil your face, But his
 4. The stump it proved a lit - tle hard, too hard for Pom - py's wood, For

hird a col - ord' gem - blum, his name was Pom - py Snow, He play'd up - on de ban - jo And
 - fore he went he for - ti - fied, With a good stout glass of rum; When on the road he thought he saw a
 dar - key did - n't seem to move from out, his hid - ing place, So draw - ing back he crook'd his head, and
 when he struck, the hickory knot went thro' the dark - ey's skull; They found his ban - jo by his side, and

on do tam - bo - ine, And for rat - tling of the bones he was the great - est eb - er seen in the
 dar - kev tall and grim, So Pom - py laid the ban - jo down to break the dar - key's shin: in the
 down at him cackunk, But Pom - py made a sad mistake, for 'twas not ing but a stump, in the
 Pom - py ly - ing dead, Spoken—And Ladies and Gentlemen, this is (by de break - ing of his head, And dey
 the first time upon record that it was ever known of a darkey's ever coming to his death.)

Lou-i - si - an - a low - lands, low - lands low..... In the Loui-si - a low - lands low,
 buried him in the low - lands,

CHORUS.

Air.

In the Lou-i - si - an - a low - lands, low - lands low.... In the Lou-i - si - an - a low-lands low,
 ALTO.

TENOR.

To last verse.
 Den dey buried him in de low - lands, low - lands low.... Den dey buried him in de low-lands low,
 BASS.

In the Louisiana Lowlands—

IN THE LOUISIANA LOWLANDS

CHAPTER I.

THE NATCHITOCHES.

A TRIP by boat down the Red River from Shreveport to Alexandria in the fall of the year is a most pleasant one. The air-line distance is about 100 miles, but the river is very crooked, and the bends make at least half as many miles more. There was a sameness to the wooded banks and a lack of hills or bluffs to vary the scenery, but there was life and incident on the trip which made it a memorable one. Over twenty-five years have passed into history since that journey, but the stern-wheel steamer "Natchitoches," her crew of roustabouts and her passengers are as fresh in memory as if the trip were only a week old. A blessed thing is a good memory; it retains only the best part of our lives, or so tints and gilds the other portions, seen through the haze of distance, that they seem to belong with our most enjoyable experiences. A note book is like a photograph, it records disagreeable things as well as pleasant ones; things which memory does not retain.

As an instance of this my note book says: "The mosquitoes were of large size, great subcutaneous penetration, and in vast numbers. I was nearly wild from their persecutions." Memory has no such record, but thinks there might have been a mosquito or two, but they were not the most important things on the trip.

We left Shreveport early in the afternoon, or "evening," as it is called in the South. There was no brain-racking "time table"; the steamer arrived at her convenience, discharged freight and passengers, took on more, and left when ready. There was no rush of passengers when the gang-plank was hauled in, for they had been at the landing hours before, looking up river for the smoke of the steamer. In going down stream all these craft "round to" and head to the current, a curious move to a "Yank," who had seen the big side-wheelers of the Hudson come to dock headed the way they were going, but here were no docks and no side-wheelers. A sloping levee paved with stones like a street to accommodate freshets and flat-bottomed boats was a necessity, and the result of the conditions of navigation on those streams.

A seat on the upper deck, forward, was cool; there were no mosquitoes, and I remarked to an elderly gentleman on my left that the evening was a most delightful one. His curt response sufficed and I remembered that I belonged to a class not popular in

the South at that time, and that my speech betrayed me. Silence followed. The silence was large and expansive, and spread out over the landscape, broken only by the puff of the steamer and the splash of her wheel. Then the pilot tooted the whistle, and instead of a steamer we could barely see something moving in the water half a mile away. It might be a man, a doe or a bear. The steamer slowed down, and rifles were brought out. Soon it was decided that it was a bear, and the shooting began. It was wild; a moving target from a moving boat is a combination calculated to disconcert the aim of any marksman, and we came near the bear before it was fatally struck. I had gone to the lower deck, and, before a boat was lowered, saw a girl of perhaps ten years lose her balance and fall overboard. Throwing off coat and vest I dove in and held her up until the boat picked us both up before the bear was taken in, for it was fat and still struggling, but was killed at once.

While shaking off the water and starting for my room my hand was grasped by the old gentleman whom I had tried to engage in conversation on the upper deck. Said he: "I will ask you to come to my room and partake of that truly Southern drink, peach and honey."

"I shall be delighted to accept your invitation so soon as I have changed my clothes. At present, as you see, I am dripping water very liberally and shall get everything wet."

When I emerged from my stateroom the old gentleman was near my door to welcome me and to show me to his room.

When we were seated he said: "Sir, I saw you throw yourself into the river after that girl before the boat had stopped or a man had stirred. I admire promptitude and bravery, sir, and I feared that you both would be drawn under the boat and killed by the wheels. Try the peach and honey again, sir; it is made from my own peaches and will not harm a man of your age and vigor. Thank you; I wish you the same. You are from the Nawth, I believe, a Yankee, as we call them."

"Yes, sir; I am from New York, and while we of that State always used the term 'Yankee' for people east of us, we find that it has been expanded by the Civil War to mean all people who fought for the preservation of the Union, even those from California."

"With us, if you will pardon me, 'Yankee' has been used as a term of reproach, but you do not take offence at being termed a 'Yankee.' What does the name mean and how did it originate; do you happen to know, sir?"

"No, thanks, no more. Well, if you urge it, very light this time. Why, yes; the name came from New England. When my forebears landed on that inhospitable coast the Indians could not say 'English' and called 'Yengeese,' and there you are. New

York and Pennsylvania were settled by the Dutch and not by the 'Yengeese.' Your ancestors do not seem to have given your people who settled Virginia any such name, but the name 'Yankee' has come to stay, and if you, a Southern man, should go to England next month you would be called a 'Yankee.' "

"But I would resent it."

"No use; the United States is known in Canada and abroad as the great Yankee nation, just as an Englishman is called 'John Bull,' and you can't escape from it."

"Perhaps you're right, sir; but it seems odd."

A long talk with the old gentleman and a story or two ended in a promise to visit him at his plantation near Alexandria after I had spent a week fishing on Catahoula Lake, by which time his family would be at home, and we would have some shooting together. The promise was renewed when we left the steamer.

I was familiar with night scenes on the big Mississippi steamers, the rounding to at a wood pile, the flaming cressets that lighted the gang-plank and the men, and threw weird shadows into the forest; the bullying of the profane mates and the rushing of the men with many sticks of cordwood on one shoulder, and all that. I knew also the professional gamblers in the cabins, which were abolished later, but now I struck a new game—new to me then, but now common enough among the gamins of New York, and it was interesting. It was called "craps," and they

"shoot," not "play," the game. Two dice are used, and they are "shot" from the hand. The points of interest to me were the terms used; and a quarter to a darky who was longing to get in, but had no stake, was invested in extending my vocabulary. As it was an original Southern darky game, I mastered the lingo, but doubt if I could do as much with the "guff of gawf," as the jargon of the new Scotch game is called, for before one attempts to play golf he, or she, must learn to call it "gawf."

I saw excited darkies calling out: "Come seben—'leben"; "Fade you"; "Big Dick is mine"; "Come, little Joe"; "Cut his throat, seben," and other things which I did not understand. My mentor informed me that any number of players can shoot craps. Before the first player shoots the dice he calls out his bet, say a nickel.

"He throws for a nickel, what does the other fellow mean by 'I fade you?' "

"He means dat he takes de bet, an' den de oders dey bets awn de side. If he frows seben o' 'leben fust, he wins, but he craps out if he frows 2, 3 or 12 on de fust, an' de nex' man frows. But if he frows 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 or 10, he makes his p'int an' can frow ag'in an' make hees p'int once mo' o' make seben, den he wins, but if seben come fust, befo' he makes hees p'int, he loses, den de oder man frows."

"Why does the new shooter blow on the dice before he throws?"

"Dattah's to blow any hoodoo dat de yallah fellow put awn de dice, fo' dem cream-cullahed nigs is up to dat, an' so's dat tall man who's de cullah o' gin-gah cakes. Yo' see de boys is 'spicious o' some w'ats got too light complected faces."

"What did that black fellow mean by calling, 'Come, little Jo'?"

"'Little Jo' is fou', maybe two 2's, o' a 3 an' 1; dey nebbah call de numbahs, 'cept seben an' 'leben, deys got names fo' 'em; five is 'fever,' six is 'Jimmy Hicks,' nine is 'Liz,' an' ten is 'big Dick.'"

As my quarter passed into the hand of my preceptor he pushed into the ring and slapped it down, crying "I fade you." Then I watched the game with interest, knowing its points and its "language." A new shooter calling: "Come seben—'leben," snapping his fingers as he throws the dice, is answered by a man who has "faded" him by: "Cut his throat, seben," and so the game goes on. It's a queer game and has invaded the North. I do not gamble in any way, and firmly decline to bet on any event, but there is something in this semi-barbaric game that tempts me to stop on Spruce street and watch it in progress on the pavement, especially as there are pickets out at Nassau street, and below, who signal the coming of the "cop," for the police have orders to arrest crap-shooters, but never attempt a foot race with the fleet-footed street Arab, who, by the way, is usually white, but may be Hibernian, Teutonic or of that

numerous Latin race which is generically classed as "Dago" in New York.

The moon was about full and some two hours high after I had become a past master in the mystery of crap-shooting and was longing for a new sensation, not that the Southern negro is not now a field for character study, but he was more so then. It is a fact that few Southern men really see the peculiar features of the darky; they were brought up with them, and naturally accept their idiosyncrasies as a matter of course, but the foreigner from the "Nawth" catches the salient points at a glance. To him it is the revelation of new life, of a people hitherto unknown to him. Hence the popularity of negro minstrels from 1845 until after the Civil War. Tastes change, and the minstrels changed, until their songs no longer bore the slightest relation to the blackened faces.

As I went up into the saloon I heard a banjo, and before the last step was reached I knew that no Southern darky was manipulating it. I claim to be an authority on the history of the banjo, and will here assert that the Southern darky, in 1860, hardly knew the instrument; his favorite was a fiddle, and he inherited his like for it from his ancestors.

I was not surprised when I saw a young white man at the end of the saloon just winding up an obligato and retiring for a rest. But he was vociferously recalled and "The Lowlands" was demanded.

The air was a singular one, with a refrain that began slowly and ended fast; it was:

"In the Louisiana lowlands, lowlands, lowlands,
In the Louisiana lowlands, low."*

And from this song the title of this sketch was chosen.

Later in the night at a landing for wood I heard one of the negro roustabouts singing of old Gen. Andrew Jackson:

"Gen'el Jackson mighty man—
Whaw, my kingdom, fire away!
He fight on sea an' he fight on lan'—
Whaw, my kingdom, fire away!"

"Gen'el Jackson find de trail—
Whaw, my kingdom, fire away!
He make a fort wid cotton bale—
Whaw, my kingdom, fire away!"

There was more of it, for all these songs are spun out to cover the time of wooding up or of heaving up the levee. A livelier song was sung in the morning as we rounded to. It had a refrain of:

"Heave away! heave away!
I'd rather court a yallow gal
Dan work fo' Henry Clay!"

The morning was well advanced when we tied up to the levee at Alexandria. Col. B., the old gentle-

* Since the above was written I have been fortunate in obtaining the words and music of this song from my companion, Gen. Horatio C. King, of Brooklyn, N. Y., and give them in another place.

man referred to, directed me to the best house in the little place, and reminding me of my promise, departed in his carriage. After dinner I strolled down to the deserted levee and found an aged colored man sitting idly on the stones gazing at the water. "Uncle," said I, for that is a common Southern salutation to men of his age and complexion, "are there many fish in the river?" I knew that many kinds of fish literally swarmed there, but it was an introduction.

"Yas, sah, dey's a-plenty o' fish, big an' little; sometimes I likes de little ones an' sometimes de big ones. I'se tryin' to cotch a big one this ebenin', but I dunno if he come. I'se been fishin' all de mawnin', but don' got no bite to-day."

There was no rod nor line in sight, and I wondered how he could be fishing, but asked no questions. The only thing in sight was the "heaving line" of a steamer which was fast to a snubbing post, with the other end in the water, a hempen line of half-inch diameter, used to heave ashore to draw out a cable. The old man yawned and lay back on the stones, as much as to say, "The interview has ended"; and I walked off to where some boys were catching perch, crappies and other small fish, which were biting lively. I asked the boys what the old man was fishing with, and one said: "He's a-fishin' fo' big cats wid a pound o' po'k, but he's mean an' hunts us off de levee w'en he's fishin', but we don'

'sturb him. I 'spec' he didn't talk to yo', but if yo' want him to talk jes' give him a fip fo' some gin an' he talk yo' ears off."

On this hint I returned to the lone fisherman and said: "Uncle, it's dry work waiting all day for a bite. Here's a dime, go up to the grocery and treat yourself. I'll look after the fishing if you'll show me where your line is."

"Thank you, sah," touching what had once been a hat; "I knowed you was a ge'man w'en I see yo' comin' along de levee. Yes, sah, I'll drink yo' health. Dattah's my fish line," pointing to the heaving line; "but I 'spec's I'll be back befo' a big catty comes along." And he limped off to the grocery. Then I began to fear that I had been too liberal, and that a dime, which he called a "levvy," might purchase more juniper juice than he could assimilate without producing vertigo, and rejoiced that my first impulse to give him a quarter, or "two bits" as he would call it, was restrained. A half hour passed and "Time, which strengthens friendship, but weakens love," began to be a burden. I was about to desert my post when my new friend appeared above the levee, none the worse for his indulgence, but rather better so far as the limp was concerned.

He hurried down, exclaiming: "I dun' 'spect I got one," and made for the line. I had not noticed the strain on it and the weaving motion until he spoke,

for I had been watching a little dab-chick dive and then guessing where it would come up.

The old man tugged on the line with all his might, and I sprang to help him, for I was stronger than he, and that we had a big fish was certain; the vibrations could only be caused by a living animal, and the resistance was assurance of its size. We piled up yard after yard of line and at last had the fish on the slope of the levee, with its head out of water. The old man produced a hatchet from somewhere and killed it with a single stroke.

I had read of the great catfishes of the Southern Mississippi that weighed 150 pounds and believed that we had a record one. I had not counted, however, on a great stone sinker that must have weighed 40 pounds, which was necessary to keep the hook and bait out in the channel, that was credited to the fish while hauling it in, by me at least.

I ran up, got a wagon and help, and we brought out our fish. It was 3 feet 4 inches long and weighed 63½ pounds. It was a record catfish for me, for a ten-pounder, taken near Potosi, Wis., in 1855, was my largest. No one seemed enthusiastic about the fish; it was a big one, but they had seen as big. Uncle Sam, as they called my lone fisherman, sold the fish for \$2.50, about four cents per pound, and with so much wealth in his possession I expected that he would blow it all in on booze, an opinion based upon what the darky boys had told me; but he was as

clear-headed as ever when he called on me after supper. Said he: "Yo' said yo' wanted to go fish in Catahoula Lake an' wanted a man an' a boat to go 'long. Is yo' got de same min' yet?"

"Yes, I want to go to the lake and camp there. I understand that the lake is about twenty miles away, but that we can strike a small stream that runs into it by a ten-mile tramp. I will furnish provisions, but I want a boat and a shanty to sleep in, if there is a shanty on the lake. I want to stay a week and then return."

A bargain was made, and next morning we left Alexandria on a wagon drawn by one mule and driven by young Sam. There was a boat, a lot of tinned goods and a sack of potatoes as well as other things that are good in camp when you can get them. The boat was a clumsy, flat-bottomed sort of a bread-tray, absolutely non-capsizable, non-dryable and almost non-rowable. I piled a lot of brush in forward and put my bag of bedding and such things as should be kept dry on top. Then, seating myself in the stern, with a tin dish for a bailer, we started off. The stream was narrow and crooked for a few miles and kept one busy dodging the low-growing branches. All went well until we came to a tree that had fallen across the stream. It was about two feet in diameter, and its lower side was below the surface of the water in places and some inches above it in others. The limbs, roots and bark all said that it

had been there for several years, yet no man had cut it to make a passage for his boat, as any Northern woodsman would have done.

I looked at the log and at the shore, then at the heavy old ark we were in, and I mentally vowed that I'd be ding-swizzled if I would help to lift such a waterlogged old tub over that log, or to make a portage with it around either end. I was paying for my passage and would assert my rights, if we never reached the lake. After I had worked up my feelings to the exploding point, Sam laid the boat alongside the log and began piling our freight on it. I sat still while he did it, the mercury in my madometer climbing higher every minute. Just let him propose that I dislocate my spine in lifting that thing he called a boat over that log! Yes, there was water enough there to drown him—but I must not think of that; a tongue-lashing would be all the punishment necessary, and I had the opening sentence formulated just as he put the last of my plunder on the log and said: "Ef yo'll jess step on dattah lawg I'll dun get de boat a-pas'."

The mercury in the madometer ceased to climb as I stepped on the "lawg" and wondered how that old man could get the boat beyond it. He removed his shoes, turned the boat head to the log and pulled a plug in the bottom. He had chosen a place where the log was some four inches above the water, and as the boat sank he stood in the bow, worked it under

the log and walked back until all was clear. Then replacing the plug he bailed out the boat. We loaded up and a gum coat on my seat was all that was needed to restore the *status quo*. I thought I knew a trick or two in running streams with a boat, but now I had learned another from a poor old darky, and might truthfully say that I knew a trick or three.

I just hugged myself when I reflected that old Sam never suspected that I had hated him for half an hour. I wanted to apologize to him, but that would never do, so I said: "Sam, you went under that tree in good shape; never took off any paint from the—— What's the name of this boat, anyway?"

"Well, sah, she don' got no name painted awn her, but we calls her Lazy Lou, dat's fo' one o' my gals, she was married las' week, an' was too lazy to comb her haih, so she jes' cuts it froo wiv a scissor. We allus call her Lazy Lou, 'cause w'en she wasn' mo'n ten yahs ole she was so lazy she let de skeeters bite fo' she bresh 'em off."

CHAPTER II.

AT THE LAKE.

CATAHOULA LAKE is about twenty miles long by from three to five miles wide; there is a good current at the lower end, where Little River and several other streams come in, and it has a big outlet off to the southeast, which flows into Red River something like a hundred miles before it joins the "Father of Waters." Sam rowed up to what he called a cabin, but which was only a 10 by 12 open camp—better than a closed house—and we unpacked an hour or two before sundown. I sent Sam to gather firewood for cooking and for the night, while I prepared a supper of fried perch, taken on the way up; bacon, boiled corn and potatoes, canned baked beans, bread, butter, tea and coffee. The coffee was for Sam, for I don't drink it, and as he had no use for it when good tea was at hand, there was no more made on the trip.

There were two sleeping places, each made of two boards cleated together, the head ends were raised higher than the others, so that they sagged in the middle slightly, but not as much as a hammock does. I noted a hole in the bark roof, and called Sam's attention to it, as it was over my bed.

"I sees de light froo de bahk; fo' shu', an' I mend

dattah hole in de mawnin'. I don' 'spec' 'twill rain to-night, an' dat's a leetle hole at bes'; no, de rain won' come to-night." This last remark as he looked at the sky and the declining sun.

I insisted on having the roof repaired at once, but the old man said: "Dey's no good bahk nigh de cabin an' dey's bahs out in de woods." He was afraid of the woods at sundown, so I picked up my gun and told him to come along with his axe. Thus assured, he soon found a suitable piece of bark from a dead tree, and the roof was patched before daylight left us, and about midnight a hard rain came down that lasted until daylight, but Sam did not want to talk about the rain.

In the morning, after breakfast, I said to Sam: "I came to this lake to get a live alligator snapper to send North. Men tell me that they are common here, and I have hooks and lines especially for them. You know the turtle I mean, don't you?"

"Yas, sah, I knows 'em, dey's two kin's o' snappahs; some's jess snappahs and de odah kin's de 'gatah snappahs. Oh, yes, I knows de snappahs, an' I cotch 'em plenty, an' I t'ink de snappahs is sweeter meat dan de 'gatah kin'."

I brought out three cotton lines of one-quarter inch diameter and 100 feet long; 300 great O'Shaughnessy hooks of Harrison's "Dublin Limerick" pattern, size 10-0, all attached to strong two-foot snoods of cotton, with a six-inch piece of cop-

per wire in the eye of the hook that was twisted into a lump so that the hook would revolve on it, as on a swivel. Sam had never seen such a lay-out, and remarked: "Golly, I'd like to get some o' dem hooks fo' big catfish, dey's de bes' I ever see."

"Sam, if you can put me where I can get an alligator snapper of 60 pounds or more, you shall have all these hooks and lines. Now get ready and we will go and catch bait;" and I produced a bait-holder made for the occasion. It was of half-inch mesh netting made like a box without a lid; loops for poles floated it, and a few light leads kept the bottom down. When extended it was 6 feet by 4, and 2 feet deep. This was to keep bait-fish alive until night.

Sam looked at it, then at my rods and reels, before he found breath to say: "I 'clar' to goodness, you is de 'pletes' man fo' fishin' dat I eber see." I was some time in figuring his "'pletes'" into "complete," but that was what he meant.

We fished, top and bottom, and caught crappies, black bass, perch and all the common fishes of that region; went to camp for dinner, and fished again until the sun told us when it was time to quit. Then we put out the lines from shore to an anchor stone, with a baited hook every three feet, and lying on the bottom. The sun was well up next morning when breakfast was over, and Sam was anxious to go to the lines, but I said: "No, Sam, we will go and fish

for bait all day again, and at night will run the lines over and see what we have, and rebait our hooks; any turtles that are there will stay there."

We did this, and our catch was several soft-shelled turtles, *A. ferox*, which Sam declared were "snappers," because of their ferocity, from which they get their specific name, and then I knew that his classification of turtles differed from mine. We also took several "yellow-bellied terrapins" and some catfish of five or six pounds. Sam wanted the catfish for camp, and I let him have one, and let the rest go free, for I don't care for a catfish that weighs over half a pound; the big ones are oily and gross. The best panfish for me in that lake was the crappie, but fish were too plenty for us to dispute over. Sam could stuff himself with catties without protest from me. The big one he caught at the levee was so rank with fish oil that I wanted none of it; yet I am told that steaks from such a fish, parboiled before frying, are freed from their grossness; I do not doubt it, for the same is true of sturgeon, which, treated in that way, makes a better veal cutlet than ever came out of a calf.

Sam and I discussed the snapper question for a while, with no prospect of an agreement, and then he said: "Yo' ain' gwine let all dese snappahs go 'cause dey ain' de kin' yo' want, an' I want de big one to cook fo' yo', an' yo'll say he's de bes'es' tuttle yo' eveh stuck a toof in."

"All right, Sam, what we catch is for our own use, if we want it, but I don't want to kill any animal, fish, bird or turtle unless it is needed for food or it is my enemy, as a rattlesnake is. You have misunderstood me; take what turtles you want and let the rest go; do the same with the catfish, but never waste animal life by killing more than you or your friends can eat."

Just how far this new religion penetrated Sam's brain is impossible to say, but the lesson may not have been entirely lost, for a few days later he carefully unhooked a big sunfish and let it go, when on previous trips he might have dropped it in the boat to die, and then have thrown it away.

Sam did not accord with my views of killing only for our needs; there was a market for food of all kinds in Alexandria, and now that we were capturing fish and turtles in greater numbers than we could use, he naturally desired to utilize them for that market. From his point of view it was the height of idiocy to turn loose catfish and turtles which had a marketable value; he could not understand it. As for me, I had not journeyed to the lake on a commercial venture; Prof. Baird wanted an "alligator snapper," a species of turtle, and wanted one that would weigh at least 60 pounds, hence I had engaged Sam to care for me on Catahoula Lake, and had put out the lines for turtles, as has been detailed.

After Sam had insisted that the ferocious soft-

shelled turtle was a "snapper," because it snapped, there was little confidence in his knowledge, or classification, of turtles. It was like the old story of the sportsman who was looking for woodcock, and was taken into tall timber where woodpeckers were numerous. Sam knew turtles in his way, but his way was not mine. Therefore, after removing the catch and rebaiting the hooks, Sam asked: "Has yo' eber had a snappah roasted in de shell?"

"No, I have never eaten turtle except in soup, steak and stew. If you have a new way to cook one, go ahead and do it."

"Den I takes dis little one, he's big nuff fo' us, an' I'll kill him to-night an' roas' him to-morry, 'cause it takes long time fo' him to die w'en he's haid is cut off, an' I do' wan' him a-kickin' in de fiah." So he cut off the "haid" and hung the turtle up by the tail to be attended to on the morrow. We fished for bait for the turtle lines, and from what little I had seen of turtle fishing on this trip I got the idea that suckers were the best turtle bait, because they caught the most turtles.

On the third evening we caught several soft-shelled turtles, one snapping turtle such as is common from Canada to Mexico weighing about 20 pounds, and an alligator snapper of nearly the same weight. This latter animal has the same general outlines as the other, ranges from the Gulf States up the Mississippi as far as Wisconsin, but prefers

the warmer waters of the South, where it "grows to a length of forty inches, or more," says Jordan. It has been known to weigh 150 pounds, and is "perhaps the most ferocious, and for its size the strongest of reptiles." In the old Aquarium at Broadway and Thirty-fifth street, New York, in 1877, we had one that weighed about 80 pounds. This beast would eat the little painted turtles from the ponds, four to six inches long, shells and all, biting through them at one grip of its powerful jaws. I believe that the one we had could bite a man's leg off, bone and all, at one bite.

"Dah," said Sam, "is two 'gatah snappahs, but I 'spec's dey ain' as big as yo' wants. But we bettah keep 'em 'cause we may get no mo'."

I had a shoe box in which we brought some of our canned goods and other things, and in this I intended to put a big turtle on its side, so that the carapace and plastron would be against the sides of the narrow box and it could not get right side up. I gave the snapper to Sam and put "de gato'" in the box, for, as he said, we might not get another. It was small for the box, and I wedged it in with a piece of board and some sticks. Somehow a tap on the head and an admonition not to let its angry passions rise did not quiet it at all, for it struck out and snapped at everything in reach. There was more of viciousness and bad temper in that boat than one often sees.

"Sam, you call these turtles all one kind, but they are different, the one in the box is an alligator snapper, while the other is the common snapping turtle; don't you see the difference?"

"No, sah, I don' see no 'stinction; we calls 'em all 'gato' snappahs, an' dem sof' shells is jes' common snappahs."

"Now, Sam," said I, in an educational effort to make this man and brother more observant of things, "look at the one I gave you; its eyes are close together and near the top of its head, which has a soft skin. Look at mine; its eyes are on the side of the head and wide apart, while its head is covered with something like large scales. The snapper has only a trace of a ridge in the center of its back, while the 'gator has three ridges." I did not try the names of science upon Sam, and I spare the reader. I have given the main points of difference between these two very distinct, yet nearly related species.

Sam thought a moment and then remarked: "I 'spect yo' is right; I ain' nebbe' notice' all dat befo'." What he thought was probably on this line: "Dey's w'ite men has eyes close togetdde' and some wide apart, an' some's got red haid, some's got black haid an' some's got bald haid, but dey's de same kin' o' man, an' heah is yo' young man fum de Nawth come a-tell me dat dese tu'ttles is differ'n', an' 'cause dey's got differen' eyes an' haid he's a differen' tu'ttle; I'se fished heah in Catahoula Lake

since I was a pickaninny an' I knows dese tu'ttles 'ca'se I was brung up wid 'em."

Our fishing for bait and for camp occupied most of the day, as we had 300 hooks to bait, and I was preferring suckers. The fish bit very fast, and in eight hours we could get enough for bait, and a few catties for Sam and some perch and crappies for me would be selected. Then getting wood, cooking and overhauling lines, eating and sleeping consumed the day and night.

I watched Sam prepare his new dish, bent on learning a new form of camp cookery, and knowing that all such knowledge is prized by sportsmen in their desire to vary the necessarily restricted menu of camp fare, I give the details of roasting a soft-shelled turtle in camp, first stating that none of the four species are found in eastern New York or New England, and that they rival green turtle for the table.

Sam took the turtle which had been killed the day before, cut through one side of the plastron and removed the whole interior arrangements and replaced them with balls made of flour, canned corn, condensed milk and the turtle's liver, with salt and pepper. Then he closed the plastron, encased the turtle in some three inches of a sandy clay, which he found somewhere, and put it in a pit where he had been burning wood for hours, and covered it up with coals. If Sam had been where he could have

reached olives, curry, tabasco sauce, rice or Philadelphia "scrapple," no doubt all of these things would have gone into that turtle. He simply played the limit; and therefore, if I ever am guilty of publishing a cook-book, I will say: "To roast a turtle in the ashes, first draw your turtle, not for the sake of getting rid of any portion of its economy, but in order to make a place for whatever you may have in camp." I am sure that this was the rule that Sam had in roasting a turtle, for he used up a portion of all the things we had except the canned tomatoes, at which I drew the line. I can eat them, cooked, as a side dish, but to spoil the flavor of a chop with them or in any other way is not agreeable, and old Sam was surprised when I would not allow him to put tomatoes into his turtle. "Here, Sam," I called, "put in these onions, you've overlooked them;" and then I wished for one little clove of garlic instead of the onions.

A dream which, as Byron says, was not all a dream, came as I lay on the cot, and the odors of baked turtle suggested a feast. I am a firm believer in dreams. I believe that we have dreams; what more? Why then I believe in them, at least as in Longfellow's Christus:

"Do you believe in dreams?" "Why, yes and no.
When they come true, then I believe in them;
When they come false, I don't believe in them."

My dream was of some epicurean delicacy, bred,

no doubt, from hunger and a savory whiff from Sam's turtle. It was that sort of disturbing dream that awakens a man instead of sending him into deeper sleep. The sun was nearly down, and Sam was removing the coals and ashes from his turtle, and had begun to dig it out from its warm bed. He broke off the clay and the skin came with it; then removing the plastron, there was steaming, savory turtle meat literally on the half-shell, and it was most excellent. I had eaten birds cooked in this way, but roasted turtle was a new dish, and I have pleasant recollections of it even now, a quarter of a century later.

These soft-shelled turtles are very flat and have a leathery shell, which is soft and flexible at the edges, a long neck with a flexible tube-like snout that is like a pig's in having a rooting appendage to it. There are four species, but all have these characteristics.

I had modified the orders forbidding Sam to reserve any game for market, so far as turtles were concerned, for I considered them to be destructive to the fishes, and they would bear the little thinning which we might do, so Sam built a log pen to confine them in; it was 8 by 10 feet and 4 feet high, with a log flooring to prevent their digging out, and it was evident that he knew their habits, if not the distinction of species. The camp was now in good running order, and we had baitfish enough in the pen

to afford a day off, so taking trolling lines, with spoons and minnow gangs, and the gun, with Sam at the oars, I proposed to see more of the lake.

Among the voices of the night I had noted the chest tones of many a frog whose lower register proclaimed him to be classed as "an old lunger," and I coveted their legs. Keeping along shore, I saw one, rigged a fly hook on a short line tied to the rod, and told Sam to back the boat near the musician. The hook passed close to his nose, he snapped at it and was my frog. Killing it by a rap on the head, I skinned the saddle and put it in the tin pail. Sam's eyes were wide open. "What yo' gwine do wid de frawg?"

"Going to eat it for breakfast, but I want about two dozen more. I reckon you can eat a dozen."

"No, sah, I do' wan' no frawgs fo' my b'e'kfas'. I heah people say dat Yankees eats frawgs, but I don' b'l'eve it; an' du'in' de wah dey said Yankees had hawns awn dey huids, but I nebbe' b'l'eve dat. Yo' said yo' 's a Yankee, so yo' mus' know if dey eats frawgs; does dey?"

"Some of them do and some don't, but I've seen frogs for sale in the markets of St. Louis and New Orleans, so other people must eat them. Do you know of any animal that is cleaner than a frog?"

And so the talk went on. I picked up the two dozen, and could have got several hundred, killed four blue-winged teal out of two small bunches,

caught two catfish of about ten pounds each, several gars and a bowfin (*Amia*). That night I got the big turtle I was after, an alligator snapper that looked to weigh at least 60 pounds, and I gave all others to Sam, taking the precaution to put the big one in the box, leave the hook in its jaw, nail the snood to the box and put the box in Sam's pen.

In the morning I rolled the frogs in cracker dust and fried them, while Sam made the tea and set the table. He watched the frying with great interest, merely remarking: "Dey does look nice, fo' a fac'."

He had fried some bacon for his breakfast, and as all was ready, I put a frog on a piece of toast and set it before him, when he remarked: "I do' wan' no frawg, nebba eat dat kin'; smells good, tho'; how does it tas'e?"

I was polishing the bones of frog No. 4 by this time, but stopped to say: "You know how much better soft-shell turtle is than the hard shells?"

"Yas, sah, fo' a fac'."

"And you know how good chicken is?"

"Yah, hah! 'Deed I does."

"Well, Sam, these frogs are as much better than chickens as a soft-shell is better than other turtles. If you don't believe it, try one, it won't kill you. Some people call 'em swamp squirrels; you can think they are squirrels if you wish."

Sam was beginning to weaken. He was longing to try them, but his life-long prejudice was in the

way. I said no more, but kept piling up the frog bones, Sam dallying with his bacon, while looking from me to the frog before him. Finally he said: "I'll jes' tas'e dis yah to see how it goes." From a corner of one eye I could see him nibble at it, but I would not embarrass him by a direct look. He paused, considered, and gave his opinion as: "Dey ain' bad."

"What ain't bad?"

"Dese yah frawgs," taking a good bite this time; "golly, dey's mighty fine."

I had nearly reached the end of my dozen, and also of my appetite, but I said: "Sorry you like 'em, Sam, but take another," and I left him to finish the lot, after which he said: "I dunno w'at my ole woman an' de chill'en 'll say ef dey knowed I'd eat a frawg; I 'spect I hab some fo' b'e'kfas' ebby mawnin' w'ile we's heah, but I do' know 'bout tellin' de ole woman. I 'spects I get some fo' her an' cut off de feet an' tell her dey's swamp squ'ls; den I'll hab to get out w'en she finds dey's frawgs. But it'll be fun, an' she'll get obah it, fo' a fac'."

The week had passed quickly, and as I had my big turtle for Prof. Baird, my mission was ended, but there was my promise to Col. B. to spend some days with him after his family returned; and the camp on the lake was preferable to a stuffy room in Alexandria, which was then a small village on Red River, and its best house mainly a bar room fre-

quented by a low class of river men, whose manners, conversation and morals were several degrees tougher than the carapace of any leather turtle it had been my lot to meet. Therefore we stayed on the lake, believing that one night in Alexandria would be enough, and more.

Sam had taken up the set lines, and as I had given him the large 10-0 hooks with wire and snood, he had them carefully inserted in some soft bark, cottonwood I think, and counted out about 250 of the original 300. He had killed all his turtles, some twenty or more, and weighing from five to twenty pounds each, perhaps in all some 200 pounds, so that we brought out more weight than we took in. We had roasted our teal in the same way that the turtle was roasted; had eaten two and had two cold for luncheon on the way, and with frogs, potatoes and tea for breakfast, we started.

Trolling along the lake to the inlet, which we came down, I caught my biggest catfish on a spoon hook. Sam reckoned that it weighed twenty pounds, while I put it at fifteen. Sam looked at me pleadingly and asked: "Yo' ain' gwine let him go, is yo'?"

"No, Sam, you may have it, but if we had killed and kept all the things we've caught you would have needed another ark like the Lazy Lou to carry them in. A man has no right to kill things that he does not need, and as I pay you for your work, I had no

right to take from Catahoula Lake one bird, fish or turtle more than we needed for our food. But, believing that the lake will furnish more food by letting you take these destructive turtles from it, I have allowed you to take them to sell, as a perquisite, a tip or reward, if you understand me; but where Nature provides so bountifully no man has a right to waste her gifts."

This was a case where I was conscious that I was "talking over the heads of the audience," but no other words were handy, and I watched my missionary effort of planting seed in virgin soil. The old man's face showed how he struggled with this, to him, new and abstract problem. He tugged at the oars and was silent for some minutes, then he said:

"Yas, sah, yo' 'flosophy am correc'; no man has a right to was'e the good t'ings w'ich de Great Creator puts befo' him; dat's a sin, as yo' say, an' I nebba was guilty of it. De good Lawd He sen' de tu'ttle an' de catfish fo' de feedin' ob us po' mo'tals down heah below, an' ou' preachah say 'all t'ings is made fo' man,' an' as yo' say, a man has no right to was'e de gif's o' Nature, I don' quite on'stan' how yo' let all de fish go."

Here was my precept and example turned against me. From Sam's point of view I had wasted many "gifts of Nature" in releasing fish which might have been marketed, to our profit. He interpreted the

law of the dominion of man over the beasts of the field in a different manner from mine. His application of the law was purely personal, like that of the game hog and the fish hog, who, although they may not kill for market, as my old colored guide did in his honest way, kill for brag. They think that a day which sends them an extra lot of birds or fish is to be credited to them as great sportsmen, and don't know that they are men of that abominable class called butchers. They believe they are great sportsmen, they "have the record for numbers." The fact is that chance, luck, fortune, or whatever you may term it, threw an extra amount of game in their way at that particular time, and they killed all they could. We have all known extra good days and extra bad ones, caused by influences beyond our control—chance, if you will; the fish were there but were not feeding, the ducks were flying wild or not at all, and so it goes.

Sam accepted the catfish if he did not accept my philosophy, and he rowed away pondering on it. We entered the stream in silence, and the Lazy Lou was going along well against the feeble current, and no word had been spoken, each being in a meditative mood, when I saw a mallard coming down the creek, and as it sheered off to the left I raised the gun from its rest on my knees and fired. The report startled Sam from his reverie, but he saw nothing to cause the shot, for the bird had dropped on land.

We had quite a hunt for it before it was found at some distance from where I had marked it down as well as I could from the boat, and it was a drake mallard, young, handsome and fat. Sam stroked its breast and asked in a tone which I understood: "What is yo' gwine to do wid de duck?" He was too polite to ask if it was to be wasted.

"The duck is for me, Sam. You have enough to feed your family for a month, and the bird will be cooked for my dinner to-morrow. It will be Sunday, and I will clean up and rest before I present myself to Col. B. on Monday. You know thè Colonel, I suppose, as you've always lived here."

"I knows him since he was a baby. His fader owned my mammy an' me, an' de Cunnel he's so neah my age I can' tell who is de oldes', but we boys went a-fishin' an' coon huntin' togedde', an' w'en I'se old nuff to wuk in de fiel's young Massa George, we called him, got me off fo' a hunt many a day, an' w'en I got a wife in de nex' parish he jess bought her so she lib awn de plantation."

"As I only formed the Colonel's acquaintance by accident on the steamer, I am glad to know something of him before I meet him. Tell me all about him."

"De ole Cunnel died w'en de wah come on fust, an' den Mas' George was de Cunnel, an' he——"

"Did he go to the war and become a colonel?"

"No, hees wife die, an' he ain' got no time to go

to wah, wid his trubbles, but hees two boys, young Mas' George an' Mas' Tearl,* dey went. Young Mas' George was a cap'n and got killed at some place in de State ob Atlanta, an' Mas' Tearl he come up fum Po't Hudson wid a shot in de lungs, an' he pine away an' die. De ole Cunnel he los' hees boys an' he los' hees plantation fo' a time, an' we black boys, who was 'mancipated by Linkum, went back to wuk fo' de Cunnel, who had been good to us, an' raised him craps dat put him awn his feet ag'in; an' one day, w'en I fotched in a whole deer, he said to me: 'Sam, yo' is free, go wuk fo' yo'se'f an' don' min' me'; I cried.

"I took my wife an' chillun away an' felt as if de whole worl' had dropped out undah me; somehow it seem wrong to see de Cunnel look so an' wuk so, an' one day I went up an' said dat I was comin' back, an' he said: "No, Sam, fo' two yahs dey's been good crops an' I lif' de mawgage in two more; yo' is makin' a good libin' fo' yo' fambly, an' I'se jess as much obleege', an' I'll 'membe' it.' I do' zackly know w'at he meant by liffin a mawgage, but took it dat he was gettin' along, dat's how it was; he's up awn hees feet ag'in, an' 'stid ob sendin' him deer, tu'keys an' bear fo' Chris'mas, he dun sen's 'em to us."

The same old log was met and passed in the same

* That's the way the name looks on my note book, taken phonetically from the old darky; possibly the name was Terrill.

way as before, only the freight had to be piled on it more carefully. The turtles had to be evenly balanced as they were piled up on it, and we required more room. At the landing we found the same boy and mule. As the old man piled the turtles into the wagon young Sam said "golly" several times, and seemed to anticipate a feast.

A shave, a general cleaning up, a stroll by the river and Sunday was passed; I was ready for a few days' shooting with Col. B.

CHAPTER III.

A HOSPITABLE SOUTHERN HOME.

It was well along in the morning when Col. B. arrived at Alexandria in an old-fashioned carry-all, driven by a darky boy. He greeted me cordially, and the boy took my satchel and gun in front with him, and off we started. The road was in fair condition, for there had been no recent rains, but the jolting of the antiquated carry-all made conversation difficult, and we journeyed in silence past fields of corn and sugar-cane, interspersed with stretches of forest land where enormous trees almost shut out the daylight; but from the winding of the road an occasional glimpse of a stream was seen, and we were going up a small tributary of Red River, which joined it near Alexandria. Soon we came to a large white house with great pillars in front, in the Colonial style, and stopped. A brace of fine setters and several cur dogs welcomed the Colonel, and a superannuated hound limped from the stable to take part in the greeting. With a rub on the head and a kind word to them all, we entered the house, but not before the younger dogs had sniffed at the stranger's legs in order that they should know him again.

The boy had surrendered the team to two other boys, and had brought my luggage into the great hall, and the Colonel directed him to show me to the guest's room in the northwest corner, "for," he said, "the sun will not trouble you there if you wish to sleep some morning." I followed the boy upstairs, wondering why I had been the recipient of all this courtesy from a stranger, and especially from one who, as Sam had told me, had lost two sons in a war which had also wrecked him financially, and from the troubles which followed it he had only just recovered his ancestral estate. Pondering on these things, I gave a few finishing touches to my toilet and joined my host in the large drawing-room.

As he shook my hand and again welcomed me, I had a chance to see him fairly for the first time. That night on the steamer, when he first repulsed my advances toward conversation and then invited me to his room after I had dived overboard to save a little girl, there was little chance to note his personality, or if there was, it was neglected, as we neglect to size up men whom we never expect to meet again. Here was a man of sixty-five, of large but fine mould, erect, with white hair worn long, and a white beard not neglected by the shears. His kindly face was careworn and seamed with lines of suffering, but his dark eye was undimmed and pleasant to meet.

"Pardon me," said the Colonel, "I have your card containing your name and address, but you inti-

mated that you had some official position which I have forgotten; will you——”

“Certainly; I am collecting fishes and reptiles for the U. S. Fish Commission, and fortunately I had for guide one of your old-time servants, Sam, who spent a week with me on Catahoula Lake, and the old man took good care of me.”

The dinner bell rang. In the long dining-room a curtain cut off a large portion, for the family was smaller than in former days. The hostess was his daughter, Mrs. H., evidently a widow, who with her two boys, George, sixteen, and Jack, fourteen, comprised the family. I felt out of place. Here was a widower who had lost his two sons, and a widow with two fatherless boys who might have been made fatherless in a fratricidal war in which I was on the other side. I felt out of place until the soup came on, when Mrs. H. began discoursing on turtles and hoped that I would enjoy one of my own catch, for old Sam had sent them the largest of the soft-shelled turtles that we had caught. This, and her exquisite tact in leading the conversation in the direction of Sam and our trip on the lake, banished all embarrassment, and as the dinner proceeded the conversation became general, and after the lady had retired the boys wanted to know if there was to be a shooting trip on the morrow, and if they would be included.

The ride over the plantation and supper passed

into history. An hour or two in the drawing-room was spent with the family, and when they retired for the night the Colonel asked me to his room. A glance showed the tastes and character of my host; here was a well-filled library, in which books on shooting, fishing and natural history were prominent. There was a gun rack containing fowling pieces and rifles of various patterns, and surmounted with a splendid pair of antlers, while rugs of deer, bear and coon skins lay about the floor. There was a grateful odor of lemon and other things, a silver kettle swung over an alcohol lamp, and all those little things which in the aggregate proclaim the gentleman sportsman, who is always a man of taste, were in evidence. His cigars accorded with the character.

I have said that there were "fowling pieces" in the rack, and I love to repeat that title, which is nearly, if not quite, obsolete. There is poetry in the name, and I love it as much as I dislike that abominable name of "shotgun," which has displaced it. Confound the shotgun! I will never use one, but when I go forth for woodcock I will take down my fowling piece. So much for poetry, harmony, euphony and all other things that lend a charm to field sports. Call my fowling piece a shotgun? As well call my rifle a bullet gun, my dainty trout rod a pole, or say that the silver-tongued hound on yonder hill is barking when he is baying on track of fox or deer!

There is much in a name, Juliet to the contrary notwithstanding, for a delicate ear is offended to hear the arbutus termed a May pink, a peony dubbed a piney, or a pond-lily called a spatterdock. Such names are degrading, and, with apologies to Juliet, I will assert that "a rose by any other name" might smell as sweet, but call it skunk cabbage and it loses something which is not tangible, but has lost much with its good name. A shotgun seems to be a coarse tool for a market-shooter, and may be made of gas pipe, but when we speak of a fowling piece the elderly sportsman pricks up his ears and recalls the famous handmade marvels of bygone years.

After we had smoked and the Colonel had put hot water on a lemon, he said: "That bear story you told me on the steamer, after some men had killed a bear that was swimming in the river, was very funny, and I want to hear it again. I had asked you to my room on the steamer after you had changed your wet clothing, for I admired the promptitude in which you went to the rescue of the girl."

The story was one in Irish dialect, too old to repeat now, but the Colonel enjoyed it more than at the first telling, and finding that he had a keen sense of humor and only needed some one to rouse him from brooding over the past, I told him other stories while he brewed the lemon, and when the time to retire came he asked: "Will you kill a deer to-morrow, chase a bear or shoot woodcock?"

"Of the three propositions the last seems most attractive, and if you agree we will try the woodcock."

"Very good, but the season is early and the birds may not be plenty, yet we will try for them. Good night."

Early October in the far South differs from the "brown October days" of the North in several ways: The leaves of the deciduous trees have not begun to take on autumn tints, and will not do so for a full month. In the North there is a popular belief that frost has a hand in tingeing the maples and other trees with faint yellows, which deepen and change to bright reds, and then in a blaze of glory die into a faded brown, and expire, to be trodden under foot. The frost has nothing whatever to do with this leaf-painting, for it goes on in the South, where frost, if it comes at all, comes after the leaves have ripened and dropped. Leaves ripen and assume the colors of ripeness just as our fruits do before falling to earth, and as a halo of white hair encircles the head of man when he nears the three-score-and-ten mark and is also nearing the day when he shall also drop—but the dogs were awaiting our movements and were impatient.

I had been out on the porch, "armed and equipped as the law directs," and the setters had discovered me. They reasoned that I was a friend of their master; I had a gun and was waiting for him to join me,

therefore there would be a hunt. They pranced around, licked my hands and showed their anxiety and impatience in many ways, and I talked to them as well as I could without knowing their names. But when the Colonel came out in his hunting suit and with his fowling piece they assaulted him in force. The boy drove up the carry-all, and off we went just as the sun rose.

It is usual that every respectable white man who is nearing middle age in the South is given a title, either judicial or military. I at first attributed the one the Colonel gave me to that fact, when he said: "Major, we are going to work some ground that is sometimes good woodcock ground as early as this, and sometimes it is several weeks later; I will not promise you a single shot at your favorite bird, because the weather in the North regulates its migration, but we may pick up a few snipe,* and they are not in the least inferior to the woodcock, except that they are a trifle smaller. What do you think?"

"I think that they are the only bird that should be called 'snipe,' but what I think will not affect the men who shoot sandpeeps and call them snipe. That

* There is no more misused name than that of snipe. All the little sandpeeps, teeters, sandpipers and many shore birds are dubbed snipe. Of course the whole family *Scolopacidae* are included in the term "snipe," and the woodcock is in the family; but as the Mahomedan says: "There is but one God and Mahomed is His prophet," so the sportsman says, "There is but one snipe, and that is Wilson's (*Gallinago Wilsoni*), the snipe par excellence."

looks like a good bit of woodcock ground in the early season."

My guess was right, and when we stopped and the boy hitched the horses, I was surprised to see him gather bunches of either mint, spearmint, peppermint or some plant of that family, and rub the horses from ears to hoofs. Never before nor since have I seen a horse so protected from flies, even when tied beside a bed of mint. Such thoughtful care I could not credit to an ignorant darky boy; it must have been taught him by a master who truly loved his dumb servants, and little by little I was becoming aware that my new friend was an exceptionally thoughtful and kind-hearted man. The perfuming of the horses with an odor hateful to insects was proof enough of that.

All gunners know that as a migrator the woodcock is the most uncertain of all quantities. Where you made a good bag yesterday, there is not one today. Therefore our setters, Bob and Dan, started into the bog with more confidence than we had. The Colonel was fully twenty yards to my left, and shot three times before Dan made a point in my front, and I started a multi-colored flash which dodged about in a puzzling way for a second or two in front of my gun, and somehow it dropped dead as the trigger was pulled without anything like an aim or even a glance along the barrel, and Dan brought me one of the most beautiful birds that exist. I say this

advisedly. I have bred golden pheasants and other gaudy birds, wood ducks and pea fowls, and while willing to admit that the form of the woodcock is not a model of symmetry, and that its head, with its great eyes in the back of it, is not beautiful, yet where in all bird life are such soft dark reds, browns and faint yellows to be found combined as they are in the plumage of a woodcock?

Early as the season was, we mustered six brace between us when we turned the horses' heads home.

There are men who love to shoot, but do not care how their game is served at table; they would permit a canvasback duck to be stuffed with the same "dressing" which is supposed to be proper to inject into a barnyard fowl. And there are men who never shoot, but who know how game should be cooked to bring out its distinctive flavor. Beefsteak is good and ham is good, but no man wants his steak fried in ham fat, nor does he wish his chops to have a flavor of fish. The cooking of game has never been written; there is no work on the subject. The consequence is that much game is ruined in cooking; the housewife does her best, but she fails in bringing out the distinctive flavors of the different kinds of game. A white-meated ruffed grouse, or a quail, should be as well done as a domestic chicken, but any dark-meated bird, prairie chicken, woodcock, wild duck, etc., should be served as rare as a beefsteak in order to get the distinctive flavor; else one

might as well turn to the barnyard fowl and be content with that.

Next morning my host asked: "How do you prefer to have the birds served?"

"Since you have asked for my preference, I will say that in the home of a sportsman I prefer to have woodcock served in the manner in which his trained servants have been accustomed to prepare them for him."

"It is kind to say that, but for my own information I will ask how the birds are served in the North? I have never been north of St. Louis, and have never eaten woodcock in the cafes there, but I have eaten them in New Orleans, but there is only one place where they serve them to please me. I am asking for information; please do not put me off with a compliment."

"Then," I replied, "I will say that in the North, and I don't doubt but the same can be said of the South and West, there are more good woodcock spoiled in cooking than are properly prepared, in the proportion of ten to one. The worst of all places to order woodcock in New York City are the celebrated restaurants where a French *chef* presides. He is perfection on all foods except game, and a 'salmi of woodcock a la chasseur' is his masterpiece in that line."

"I remember to have seen the name in New Orleans cafes, but have no idea what it is like, for I

tired of experimenting in that direction," said the Colonel. "You seem to speak from experience; what is the dish like?"

"Like a desecration. You know, Colonel, that the Deity is said to send us food, while an entirely different person sends the cooks, and the man who invented a salmi of woodcock was certainly sent from Inferno, and should be ordered to return to his station at once. It is a stew of woodcock with onions or garlic, mushrooms and other things, in which the bird is smothered so that it might as well be a salmi of sparrows or bats, as far as one can discover. The mess may be good to some people, but to a man who has the sense of taste developed to the point that he wants his woodcock to differ from a kidney stew, it is disappointing. To a man who thinks a clam chowder the perfection of the culinary art, this woodcock chowder would be a grand dish."

"You are right," said the Colonel, "but I have not yet learned how you prefer to have your woodcock served. You have told how they should not be prepared for the table, but have dodged the main question, if you will permit me to put it in that shape."

Cornered in this way, there was no alternative; at the risk of running counter to the predilections of my host, I said: "There are epicures who hold that a woodcock should not be drawn, but cooked with the 'trail' in; they carry this idea into the cooking of terrapin, and cite the fact that we eat oysters, clams

and whitebait without opening their stomachs, and ask why we should be averse to eating other animal life in the same way, especially such forms as those named, where they claim there is nothing objectionable. There can be no answer except: *De gustibus non est disputandum*, which is merely a Latinization of the old Irish saying of: 'It's no use av disputin' taste, as the ould woman said when she kissed her cow.' I am free to say that I prefer that the birds be drawn, although I have eaten them undrawn, and I do not insist on the drawing."

"Will you permit me to call attention to the fact that you have been very diplomatic and have parried my questions? You have told of the methods which you do not like, and it is evident that you have positive ideas on serving woodcock, but hesitate to give them words."

"At home I have the birds drawn, saving the hearts and livers, truss up the feet; using the bill as a skewer after the skin and eyes are removed from the head; a thin slice of salt pork is laid over the breast, the hearts and livers are chopped, seasoned and buttered. Then a thick slice of stale bread is hollowed out to receive the bird. The bread is buttered and browned in the oven; the birds are roasted about eight minutes. While they are roasting fry the bread, drain it and cover with the hearts and livers, then place the birds in the cavities and serve hot."

"Our own recipe exactly," said the Colonel, "except that you forgot to mention the Burgundy, served at the temperature of the room."

"It was not forgotten, but was left for you to add: I have spitted them on a twig and broiled them over a camp-fire," I added, "but it is best in that case to split them down the back, broil not more than five minutes, butter liberally, and eat with closed eyes."

"Excellent!" the Colonel exclaimed; "our old cook will, I think, serve them to your taste, and the Burgundy has been on the sideboard for twenty-four hours. Just step into my room a minute before we prepare for dinner."

Such a dinner stands prominent among hundreds of good dinners: soft-shelled turtle soup, boiled bass, fillet of beef done to the queen's taste, fried hominy, and then the king of all game birds for the table, the royal woodcock; all the vegetables of the season and those other accompaniments which a refined taste suggests. Blessed be he who gave us that excellent motto, now used by the Hoboken Turtle Club, of New York City: "As we journey through life let us live by the way." It's a motto well worthy of thought, for it's about all a fellow gets in this vale of tears, bustle, rheumatism, turtle, woodcock and Burgundy; and the latter brings on gout.

In the Colonel's room the work of the setters was reviewed in detail. "Did you notice how grandly young Bob backed old Dan's point before you killed

your second bird? He'll make a splendid dog in another year if he's hunted enough; there's no better stock in the South, sir; no better stock anywhere. You have had a wider experience than I, Major, but I challenge you to produce a finer brace of setters than Bob and Dan."

"I can't do it, but I challenge you to show reason for giving me a military title."

"Challenge accepted. I got it from a batch of letters awaiting you at Alexandria, and which my boy brought me for you." As he said this a shade passed over his face, and he toyed with his cigar awhile. What the old darky Sam had told me about one son being killed before Atlanta and another getting his death wound at Port Hudson came up to me, and again I felt out of place, but smoked on until after a while the Colonel added: "Were you with Sherman or Banks?"

I saw the drift of his question: Was I with either of the armies that made him almost childless? His tone expressed more than words can, and I hastily answered: "Oh, no, my service was entirely in Virginia, with the Army of the Potomac."

The old man's face changed, but he made no further remark about the war, and surely I would not.

"When we drove up to the house on Monday," said the Colonel, "you may have noticed a poor old blind hound that came out to greet me; old, lame and blind!"

"Yes, I saw the poor old dog and patted his head, knowing that he had grown old in your service, as many of your servants have, but, like them, he is not to be turned adrift because he is no longer useful."

"There is more than that," said he; "I once had two sons, as brave boys as ever trod this earth. Like their father and his ancestors, they were fond of the chase, and as they grew older they longed to hunt more dangerous game than deer and turkeys, and they collected a lot of mongrel dogs for bear hunting, and descendants of these curs were among our welcomers. You noticed them?"

"Surely, couldn't help it, for they were all eager for my acquaintance as one of your friends, and I mentally put them down as bear dogs."

"Yes, that's what they are; they will bark around and harass a bear until the hunter comes up, when braver dogs would be killed."

The old man toyed with his cigar, and there was silence. He looked up as one from a dream and said: "You see that bearskin rug on the floor, the one with half the skull in, I mean?"

"Certainly; it is a prominent object because of having only half the skull in. I noticed it the first time I came into the room."

"About a dozen years ago my two brave boys organized a bear hunt. Old Bugle, the poor old blind hound, was then two or three years old and would not be left behind. They started a bear in a cane

field, and the dogs ran him into the tall timber and brought him to bay. The cur dogs were nipping at his heels when the boys came up, and emptied their rifles into the bear—you know that we had only muzzle-loaders then—but the dogs were encouraged by the presence of the boys, even if the boys knew better than to urge the dogs on. A cur came too near the bear and was being squeezed to death, when my youngest boy, Terrill, rushed in to club the bear with his rifle. He was knocked down and a great strip torn across his breast while his brother was loading his rifle.

“While my boy Terrill lay under the bear, only saved from death by his brother and his canine friends, old Bugle dashed in to rescue his master, and received a stroke which blinded him for life. The bear was so assailed on all sides that he could not attend to finish his human prey, which was under him, and my eldest boy, George, put a bullet in his brain which took off half of the skull. The skin of that bear lies before you, and you have seen the poor old sightless hound who would, if asked, track a bear as eagerly as he did a dozen years ago, but the boys think it best to leave the old dog home when a bear is to be started. What do you say to having a bear hunt some day?”

“Nothing would please me better, for I have never hunted a bear, although I have met several under circumstances when either I was not prepared to kill

one or it was in summer, when neither hide nor meat was good, and I passed them by."

The clock struck midnight; it was raining hard, and the wind beat it fiercely on the window; the Colonel wanted to hear that bear story in dialect again, and laughed as heartily at it as if he was listening to it for the first time. The kettle was steaming away merrily, and when we parted, an hour later, the famed governors of the Carolinas, had they been there, would have made no remark.

The Colonel, as he bade me good night, said: "I'm afraid that this storm may postpone our hunt for several days."

CHAPTER IV.

A BEAR HUNT.

CONTRARY to the Colonel's expectation, the rain stopped about noon the next day, but the sky was overcast and threatening, so that the day was passed indoors. I now had a chance to make the acquaintance of the boys. George was a strong lad of sixteen, dark, erect and manly, while his brother, Jack, of fourteen, was not dark, and was one of those boys who are weak from making rapid growth, but who promise to broaden out after they attain their longitude, and become strong men. Up to this time the daily greetings had been the extent of our intercourse. I was reading on the piazza, and the boys were in earnest conversation on some subject at a little distance. Finally George said, loud enough for me to hear: "No, you do it," and walked away. Jack came toward the porch, and as he came up the steps I dropped the book and made some remark.

Without hesitation he stated the business on hand: "George and I have heard that there was to be a bear hunt, and we want to go. We would have been pleased to have accompanied you on the woodcock expedition, but were not sufficiently urged, and

we stood on our dignity and would not ask for an invitation. George says that a word from you to grandfather would bring the invitation; that is, if you do not object to our going."

Here was a manly speech from a manly boy, a straightforward statement of what he wanted, with no circumlocution. I mentally recalled the adventure his uncle had had with a bear when he was about Jack's age, and being in doubt about his mother's views on bear hunting by boys, I cautiously answered: "Well, Jack, I know just how you feel about joining the hunt, for I was a boy myself, in the auld lang syne, and when about your age was in a fearful state of excitement when a deer hunt was proposed and I did not know if I would be 'sufficiently urged,' as you put it, and, like you, I was too proud to ask. Nothing would please me better than to have you join us, for the enthusiasm of boys is contagious with me, and I always like their company. But please remember that I am only a guest of your grandfather's, and in that capacity it might be indelicate for me to offer him suggestions concerning the composition of the party which shall make the hunt to which he has so kindly invited me. Has that view of the situation occurred to you?"

"Yes, sir, it has; and George and I have talked it all over. Ho-o, George! Please wait until George comes up; he's only down there by the road, waiting for me to join him and report on what you say;

please wait for him, he can tell you all about the case better than I can."

Jack sat down, and as George was rather dignified in approaching after his brother's call I had time to review the situation. I had in some way, not clearly understood, become the guest of a Louisiana planter who had lost his only sons in the Civil War. His widowed daughter and her two sons constituted his family. I thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality of Col. B., especially as a Union soldier was generally *persona non grata* in that locality. I was not sure but Mrs. H., the mother of the boys, was a "war widow," but so far the Colonel and his family had not made reference to the war further than to give me a military title, obtained from letters, and certainly I would not refer to it.

As George came slowly up the steps, I said: "George, your brother has ably laid out your case, as you decided that he should do, but as a guest I am diffident about talking on this subject to your grandfather. What do you say?"

"Mother says that you have awakened grandfather out of dreams of the past. She says that he often breaks out into a laugh when alone and is more cheerful than she ever knew him since her brothers were lost in the war. That being the case, it is only necessary for you to say the word and we boys go with you on the bear hunt."

"Will you get your mother's consent to go?"

The result was that Mrs. H. came and talked of the dangers, but in the end I got her consent. She only got to the point of "Veni, vidi," while the boys could have added "vici," but the whole scheme was subject to revision by Col. B.

That evening, after the lemons and cigars had been consumed, I told him that the boys wished to go with us, and after stipulating that George should remain close to him, while Jack should do the same to me, it was settled that the boys should go. When I retired, after midnight, I was waylaid by both boys to know the verdict. They had not gone to bed, and there is little probability that they slept after they did go. Oh, if the enthusiasm of youth could only abide with us!

As the previous day had been overcast and somewhat threatening, the Colonel had called up a venerable darky named Tom, one of his pensioners, who had been on the plantation before the Colonel's father came on earth, and whose age was as much a matter of conjecture as that of the Elgin marbles. With his snow-white head uncovered, lame with "rheumatiz" and bent "wid de misery pains," Tom hobbled up the steps to the porch where we were seated.

"Well, Tom, what kind of weather are we going to have for our hunt to-morrow? If it is going to rain we will wait for a better day," said the Colonel.

The old man fumbled with his hat, looked at me,

turned his thoughts inward and replied: "I heerd de boys talk 'bout a hunt in mawnin' an' I jess kep' a notiss awn de wedda signs fo' to see w'at's a-comin'. I all'a's keep a' eye awn de wedda, 'cause o' de roomatiz in my laig an' de misery pains in de back, an' ole Aunt Mary, who claims to be de oldes'——"

"Never mind Aunt Mary, Tom; tell us what you think the weather is to be."

"Well, Cunnel, de ole cat didn't wash hees face dis ebenin', and dat means dat dah's no rain to-maw. De smoke goes up straight fum de chimly, and dat backs up w'at de ole cat says. De mawnin' 'll be bright, an' de day good, an' Ise on'y too sorry 'at I'm too ole to go an' 'joy de sp'ot. I wish yo' plenty ob it." And hat in hand the old man hobbled off.

George and Jack were too well bred to knock at my door before daylight, but as their room was next to mine it may be taken for granted that I did not oversleep. I might have said with Bottom: "And, I pray you, let none of your people stir me; I have an exposition of sleep come upon me." But what availed such an old foggy desire to two boys who were going on their first bear hunt? Of course they talked, and not *sotto voce*; they were not at all interested in the somnolent tastes of their neighbors because their thoughts did not run in that direction. If some person had hinted to these enthusiastic boys that they were disturbing the rest of the stranger within their gates they would have quieted down;

but what boy of sixteen, who is going on his first hunt for bear, deer, turkey, grouse or other game, ever had a corner in his brain for any other thought? If he had he would not be in my list of interesting and lovable boys. And so I rose early without regret, and I hate to be up before the sun.

After an early breakfast we assembled on the porch, and a vigorous young darky called Joe appeared and blew several long blasts upon a horn. Darky boys and dogs swarmed at the call. Jim was evidently the "whole thing" as far as darky boys and dogs were concerned, and he laid down his laws to the boys, and his law was like unto that of the Medes and Persians.

When the horn sounded every dog on the plantation assembled. The poor old blind Bugle, who had been blinded by a bear years ago, came up and sniffed around among the dogs and men, and then, with drooping tail, went off to the negro quarters before we started. The setters, Bob and Dan, were there, and after licking our hands went and lay down in a corner of the porch as the party started, knowing that their services as bird dogs were not needed. How they knew this cannot be attributed to instinct. There had been no bear hunt during the year. The actions of these dogs were the result of intelligent reasoning, not of a "subnego," but of a well-developed canine brain.

We mounted our horses and were followed by

some twenty negro men and boys, for a bear hunt was a holiday on the plantation, and there were nearly a score of mongrel dogs of varying sizes and colors and no two alike. Old Tom's forecast of the weather proved correct; the sun rose clear, and the Colonel remarked that we would find it hot in the thickets at midday, and we did. The master of ceremonies was the before-mentioned Joe, a powerful man, whose "blacksnake" whip was held in great respect by both dogs and boys. Not a cur dared to stray from the road into the brush, nor a boy ventured to be unduly hilarious.

At a "likely bit of canebrake" near a stream Joe turned in and started the dogs, our party, the Colonel, George, Jack and I, keeping the road. A hound's voice broke into loud bay, and Jack, who was only fourteen years old, called out: "They've started him!" but Joe dispelled that notion by calling: "Bunce, come back! Yo' heah me? 'Come heah!" Shortly afterward a dog ki-yied, and Joe exclaimed: "You fool dog" (another ki-yi), "go chasin' a' ol' rabbit w'en we's out fo' bah," and once more the blacksnake enforced the lesson.

It was slow work for men and dogs in the brakes and thickets, and we ate our midday lunch beside a spring, and had just mounted, when about a mile away the whole pack opened cry, and Jack and I, the two novices at this sport, wanted to dismount and enter the thicket to join in the chase.

The Colonel said: "There's no hurry; they've only struck a fresh track, and the bear may lead them a long chase yet. Keep in your saddles until the dogs bring him to bay, and we'll follow the roads; it's much easier."

The voices of the dogs were evidence of much hound blood in the pack; "jess 'nuff," Joe said afterward, "to make 'em stick to de track, but all houn'," he explained, "ain't got de grit to get close 'nuff to a bah to make him stan' till de men get up, an' if dey's got too much grit dey gets killed. A good bah dog mus' hab a good nose an' not too much grit, jess 'nuff."

We rode leisurely along for about two hours, when the excited tonguing of the pack told us that they were near the game. Then the darky boys in the rear added their voices to the cry. It was quite musical, and recalled the remarks of Hippolyta:

"I was with Hercules and Cadmus once
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta; never did I hear
Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry. I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder."

A blast from Joe's horn announced that the bear was at bay, but the Colonel said: "Don't dismount yet; he'll break away and lead 'em another chase;

that's only his first stand. Halt here at these corners until we hear which direction he takes."

The din was increasing in vigor; barks, yelps and howls all mixed, with the voice of Joe above all, as he encouraged a dog that needed it, or cautioned one that was too venturesome. Then the cry of pursuit took the place of that of battle, and we knew that our game had broken away and was again leading the dogs. "They are coming our way!" "Yes, sure," "No, he has turned," were the remarks as we sat in our saddles at the cross-roads. Again the bear stood at bay, and Joe blew his horn, while the same exciting sounds came to us. "Will he come our way?" "No," said the Colonel, "come on; he's tired of the brakes and thickets, and is making for the upland and the tall timber, where, if he can't outrun the dogs, he thinks he can climb a tree. Come on!" And our horses were speeded for the first time that day. Even the *blase* Colonel was now excited, and we reached the next road just in time to see the bear enter the fringe of bushes below the tall timber, with Joe and the dogs close behind.

Again Joe's horn sounded as the dogs brought the game to bay. "Here we will dismount and hitch our horses," the Colonel ordered, "and go into the woods. George, you stay by me, and do as I say; Jack, you will keep by the Major, and obey him in all things." This had been decided upon the evening before, and at my request, for I am very fond of

boys who are under sixteen years, and of those who have passed twenty, but between those years the boy—I speak in general terms—has a conceit that he knows more than King Solomon, and entertains a patronizing sort of contempt for all who happen to be older than he. I speak from experience. When I was between those ages I knew positively that worldly knowledge had advanced since my father was a boy; “things are different now,” is the motto of the boy of this particular age; so, George being sixteen and Jack fourteen, I chose the younger, the one who had not yet thought of being a man. I like that sort of a boy.

The trees and underbrush tended to drift men apart as we forged along to that Babel of sounds made by a score of dogs snapping at the heels of a bear, who turns upon one detachment, only to be assailed in the same place by another. Guided by the din, we pushed on, sweating at every pore in the dense woods on a warm day, the fight growing nearer every minute.

“Jack,” said I, “be careful now; don’t shoot without taking careful sight. Remember that Joe is there among the dogs, and you don’t want to plug him nor kill a dog. Remember that you are not to use your rifle until I say the word. If you waste a shot on the bear I may have to shoot before it breaks away from the dogs, and I want you to kill this bear. Are you sure that you will do as I say?”

Jack was certain of it.

We were nearing the conflict, and while Jack and I were on an equality as far as never having killed a bear was concerned, I was older and had myself more under control. He was trembling with excitement, and my interest in the hunt now centered in Jack. The fight had drifted off our way, and we seemed likely to be first on the field, and we were.

There, not 200 yards away, in open timber, was what appeared to be a black, seething mass of growling, yelping, howling animal life, with Joe on its outskirts, yelling, coaxing and cursing, as we approached. A dog bit the bear in the hind leg, but did not get away quick enough, and had his throat cut by a sweep of the bear's forepaws. Another had his leg broken in the same manner. Jack cocked his rifle to shoot, but I restrained him.

"No, Jack, the bear is on all fours, and is surrounded by dogs. If you shoot now you may kill a dog and not touch the bear; wait until he rises on his hind legs to cuff a dog and then let him have it."

The advice was theoretical, but good. Jack was also good, but young and enthusiastic, and he took a pot-shot at the bear and killed a dog. The shot encouraged the dogs, for they then knew that they had the backing of man, the most formidable animal that this world contains. The dogs knew it because they had reasoning powers. Does any owner of a dog doubt this?

I brought up my rifle and lowered it. It would be more to Jack or his brother to kill a bear than it would to me. "Jack," said I, "you were shaky. Now that you have loaded your rifle, cool off a little; the dogs will hold the bear now, for he is tired and does not dare to put them all in his rear by running. You see, there is no——" Crack! went a rifle, and I turned and saw that George had fired and missed. All this time the fight continued; harassed in front and rear, with an occasional nip on the hind leg from a more venturesome dog, the bear would swing suddenly and send a dog flying several feet, yelping all the while and with several slits in his hide that would take time to heal. Joe stood near the fight, overseeing the dogs, but the other darkies were not there; it was safer in the brush.

"Now, Jack, when the bear rises on his hind legs again take a careful sight back of his fore leg, if his side is toward you; square in the breast if he faces you, or just below his shoulder if his back is to you. Now he's rising; take good aim, but don't dwell on it." The back of the bear was toward us as he rose, and the dogs in his rear nipped him. Jack's rifle was at his shoulder just as the bear whirled and faced us, and as he fired the bear tossed a dog and came down on all fours to renew the fighting. The dogs were not so eager now, the hard run, the fight and excitement had tired them as well as the bear, and the contest was not as fierce as it had been.

"Missed again," said Jack, and George called out: "I'll fetch him next time he rises," when the bear staggered among the dogs and fell. The dogs did not worry him much after this; they were glad to lie down and rest. Jack wanted to go up to the bear, but I forbade it, and it was well I did so; for a young dog, presuming that the bear was dead, went nosing around to lick its blood or to worry it, roused the enemy, who struck the dog a blow he would remember, got up, made a charge on the dogs and fell dead.

We cautiously drew near. The Colonel was not there, and Joe and I had considerable regard for a bear that had made such a grand fight, and might have life enough left to rouse up and take a man with him, but several prods with a pole had no effect, and we officially pronounced the bear dead. Then the crowd of darkies appeared to spring from the earth, like Macbeth's witches, and the Colonel came limping in. He had been hurrying on, had caught his foot under a root, and in falling had turned his ankle, and it was paining him. He wore boots, and could not bear to have the boot on the injured foot pulled off. "Cut it," said he, and I had it off in short order. His ankle was swollen, and as he could not walk through the miles of brush to the horses, there was a question what was to be done. Joe offered to carry him out on his back, but I decided that Joe should see to getting the bear out of the woods and leave the Colonel to me.

I had seen wounded men carried off the field in a blanket slung between two muskets, and the Colonel must go in an easier manner than clinging to a man, "pick-a-back." We had axes and rope. Two stout poles laid two feet apart were laced with rope; twigs were laid lengthwise on the litter and then a bed of Spanish moss was made on the twigs. I would have liked the bear skin to top it off with, but that was needed to keep the bear meat clean. Joe detailed two strong men and an axe-man to clear the way, and we laid the Colonel on the improvised litter and started. Joe was left to dress the bear, wait for the return of the men with the litter and take the bear out on it to a wagon, which was in waiting.

We picked up the Colonel's rifle on the way out, and as soon as we came to water I wrapped up his ankle and soaked the bandages, which were handkerchiefs, neckties and his stockings. Our axe-man cleared the way through the brush for two men abreast, and when we came to the horses a discussion arose.

"Riding home, Colonel," said I, "with your leg hanging down will increase the inflammation in your ankle. I am not a surgeon, but I know that; I don't know whether your trouble is a dislocation, a fracture or a strained tendon, but I fear that a ride, which I estimate is at least ten miles, in the saddle will not only add to your suffering, but may defer your ultimate recovery."

"Well," replied the Colonel, "if I go back in that lumber wagon with the bear, I will either sit on the seat and with my leg down and get more jolting than I will on Caliph, one of the best saddle horses in the State, or, if I have a bed beside the bear, I will not only have a dislocated ankle for Dr. Gordon to attend to, but there will be curvatures and dislocations of the spine to be corrected. I will ride."

I was overruled. When the Colonel was disabled I thought myself in command. Fortunately, George came to the rescue and suggested: "Suppose you ride woman fashion, grandfather, and put your injured leg over the pommel?" That settled the question. And in that way we went home.

The sun had gone down before we reached the mansion, and supper was awaiting us. Dr. Gordon was there before us, having been sent for by a special messenger, and as there was no immediate danger he waited until after supper to examine his patient. In the meantime I examined the Doctor. He was stout, reserved, fifty at least, and had a glass eye. This defect was only apparent when he looked directly at you, but as he complimented me on the manner in which inflammation had been kept down in the woods and on the way home, I saw that he was willing to grant to a layman a little knowledge of "first aid to the injured."

CHAPTER V.

SPINNING YARNS.

HAVING put the Colonel to bed and ordered his supper sent him, the Doctor and I joined the family at the evening dinner. The talk was naturally upon the hunt, in which the boys occupied the center of the stage. I took a dislike to the Doctor because of his extreme punctiliousness, his deliberate speech and his general manner, all of which I mistook for affectation, a thing that is not excusable in a man who has reached the time of life when he debates whether he shall shave or let it grow. There is an indefinable something about a man which attracts or repels at the first contact, and as often reverses the verdict after further acquaintance.

Said George: "Jack missed his first shot, and so did I, but I didn't kill a dog."

"What does a cur amount to, anyway?" Jack hotly replied. "If I'd a-killed Bob or Dan when shooting woodcock, that would have been something to talk about; but a cur or two from the negro quarters are not worth mentioning."

George, who, as I have said, was at the "disagree-

able age," answered: "You happened to kill the bear at your second shot, with a cooler head to coach you. If I had a second shot I might have done the same, without killing a dog."

As a guest I was uneasy, and I noticed that the Doctor was, but, to our relief, Mrs. H. quietly said: "Boys, remember that the table is no place to bring quarrels; there must be no more talk about the hunt until you leave the table. Doctor, will you be helped to more of the fowl? Will you, Major?"

"Blessed are the peacemakers!" We left the table without allowing the boys to mar the harmony, owing to their early training under a most excellent mother.

In the evening Dr. Gordon and I met in the room of Col. B. The Doctor still addressed me as "Sir," and I soon learned that that was a term which was common in the South, and thought no more of it. If a man in New York should begin a sentence with "Sir! I received your note," etc., I would think that there was trouble brewing. As my dislike of Dr. Gordon was merely a temporary one, not based on any reason, it soon passed, and after we had summoned Joe to look over the wounded dogs by lamp-light, and the Doctor had attended to them as carefully as if they were human, I knew more of him.

In addition to the one dog killed by Jack and one by the bear, the casualties included three broken legs, which were set; about a dozen cuts, which needed a

stitch or two, and an assortment of cuts and bruises which time would heal. These things attended to, we took a look at the bear, as it hung in an outbuilding. It was a big fellow, fully five feet in length, and probably weighed close to 400 pounds.

It was time that I took my leave, but both the Colonel and the Doctor so strongly urged me to stay a few days longer that I complied.

Doctor Gordon found that the Colonel had merely sprained his ankle, but it might take a month for him to recover, and forbade him to indulge in another bear hunt, even in the saddle, until he gave permission, and after our errand of mercy in caring for the wounded dogs, we spent the evening in the Colonel's room, where he insisted on my repeating all the stories I had entertained him with, for the benefit of the Doctor, who, much to my surprise, not only enjoyed them, but related a few himself. His excessively formal manner, to which I took a dislike at first, thawed out considerably, and it was evidently not affected.

"Sir," said he to me, "I am very glad that you have decided to remain here a few days longer, and I hope to have the pleasure of shooting with you, sir. I came down into this country to visit old friends and enjoy a little hunting, and only arrived yesterday. I had notified the Colonel that I would drop in on him this evening, and my messenger brought back word that the Colonel was on a bear hunt, and

had been injured, and that is how I happened here when you arrived, sir."

My problem now was to decide on the Doctor's nativity. In those days my ear was good on dialect and accent. Strictly speaking, the Americans have no dialects, but there are several accents, forms of pronouncing words and uses of local phrases that are peculiar to certain districts. This is not so much the case now as it was years ago. I must solve this riddle as a pleasant task, for no doubt the Doctor would tell me all about it if asked. He "came down into this country," therefore his home was north of it. His name denoted that some ancestor was "frae the land o' cakes," but Dr. Gordon was evidently born in America, but where? There seemed no marked accent to betray him.

The Colonel was lying easily, with his injured ankle well bandaged and protected from the weight of the bed covering by a light frame. Occasionally the Doctor would remove the wrappings, wet the ankle with some embrocation and again wrap it up. Then he would prepare something for the patient to take internally, and, in order to be sure that it was correctly compounded, he took a dose himself and insisted on my doing the same, "for fear," as he said, "your ankle might be sprained." There was lemon and sugar in the prescription, and it was not in the least disagreeable.

The talk had run in various directions, shooting

different kinds of game, fishing for many different fishes, in different States and Territories, when, after applying another soothing embrocation, the Colonel suggested: "Tell us about that swan shooting trip, Doctor. I know that our friend will like to hear it."

"Certainly," said I.

"It's not much of a story," the Doctor remarked, "but there's one foot of the swan, and what became of the other I never could find out." And he drew from his pocket a pouch made of a swan's foot. The nails were left on, the bones taken out, and the skin split between the toes and then tanned. A silken top with a shirr-string had been added, and it was a most unique tobacco pouch.

"Was that all that you got from that swan?"

"Yes, he left me that as a memento. You see it was this way: It was in the first year of the reign of President Buchanan; let's see, that was in 1857—yes, sir, 1857. I was then thirty years old, and had just graduated, but was in no hurry to settle down to the practice of medicine, because my parents were well off, and it was not necessary that I should. So, in the autumn of that year, I joined two young saw-bones, whose needs were no more pressing than mine, on a duck-shooting trip to Beaufort, on Pamlico Sound, in North Carolina. We tried the swamps about Pantego for ducks and frogs without getting many ducks, for they were difficult of ap-

proach, but the frogs were large and fine. Then we shifted to the Pago River, and only found a lot of blue-peters and other worthless birds, and we reckoned it was best to go down on Pamlico Sound, where the natives said that not only ducks and geese were feeding, but swans also. We hired a native, who was a fisherman, gunner, oysterman and beach-comber, as the season or the occasion required, to take us in his little sloop, which had a little cabin in it. He was to sail us where we wanted to go, provide fresh water and do the cooking when necessary, for two dollars a day, which was more of a sum then than now. We laid in provisions, such as we could get—ham, bacon, eggs, biscuits, etc.—and started in the good sloop Eliza Jane, Captain Bill Smith. He had a quantity of fishing tackle and wooden decoy ducks, and the outfit was complete.

“We sailed about for a week, shooting from blinds on the islands and trading ducks for provisions at the little settlements, where a hen’s egg was worth as much as a duck, but that didn’t trouble us. Sims fell overboard while landing a big fish and Abbott tried to rescue him with a boat hook, but only rescued the seat of his trousers; Capt. Bill did the rest by lying on the deck and catching his hand. Fortunately, the Captain was a bachelor, and was handy with the needle. A week passed and found us in a blind on Roanoke Island an hour before daylight and a heavy fog covering everything. It was very still,

and we could hear movements of fowl on the water near us.

"An hour is a long time in a blind on a raw morning, but we kept perfectly still, for Capt. Bill had whispered 'swans.' His practiced ear had detected some sound that ours did not. Just as the sun came up a puff of south wind suddenly lifted the fog high enough from the water to show a flock of swans at a long shot that were startled at finding themselves so near shore and were swimming away. Four double guns sent messengers after them, and the flock started to take wing, but one lay on its side in the water, apparently dead. I jumped into the skiff and Capt. Bill rowed me out. The flock was pounding its great wings on the water a quarter of a mile away, for it takes a swan a long time to get on the wing, and I was watching them gradually rise when Bill said: 'Take him in.' A leg lay stretched toward me, and I caught it and began pulling. At this the huge bird gave a flop, left its foot and part of its leg in my hand, and at the same time struck me in the eye with the tip of its wing, righted itself and started off after its fellows. And not a gun in the boat! I could not have used one, for my eye pained me so much, but Bill spoke feelingly on the subject, much as an army mule-driver does when the pontoons are stuck in the mud. As we neared shore he called out: 'Boys, Gordon didn't want a whole swan, so he only brought in a drumstick.' Oh! the pain in that eye,

and the other was weeping so with sympathy that I had to be led ashore. Cold-water applications were the best that could be done in that place to keep down inflammation, and when my two medical friends gave the order to start for home I knew that the case was serious. I lost an eye, but gained a tobacco pouch. My friends decided that the swan's leg had been broken many days before, and was only hanging by the skin, and that a shot from our guns had struck it in the head and stunned it. That seemed to be a reasonable explanation, and we accepted it."

We all examined the pouch again, as now it had a history, and I discovered that a date had been written on it, but was now indistinct. I had noticed the Doctor's glass eye when we first met, but it was only to be noticed in certain lights and in some expressions of his countenance.

I had followed his story closely, watching every word for an accent that would betray his nativity, and the result was: He pronounced the President's name after the Virginia fashion "Buck-hannon," and not "Bewcannon," as Northern men do. He said "well off" instead of "wealthy," and that's New England. "Autumn" instead of "fall," English and perhaps part of the South. He said "Bewfort" and not "Bowfort" when he spoke of Beaufort; that's Carolinian. He "reckoned," which is Western, and called coots "blue-peters," but that's a local name

along the sounds where he was shooting. The problem was not solved.

After the Doctor had finished the tale of the swan's foot and the lost eye, he at once attended to his professional duties, bathed the ankle, bandaged it and administered the internal medicine. The patient was propped up in bed and said: "The Doctor is a philosopher, who takes things as they come, and doesn't worry about them after the temporary pain has passed. His swan's-foot pouch is unique and useful, but few men would care to make the exchange he speaks of in such a light manner."

"One might as well speak lightly of it," replied the Doctor, "for the thing was done, and anything I might say to-day could not alter the fact. If I had been consulted about the trade before it was consummated, it is probable that I would have declined the offer of a single swan's foot for an eye, and might have demanded a whole swan, or a thousand swans, the number being based upon the day's market quotations of swans and eyes. The exchange was not profitable to me, and it is doubtful if the swan gained much, but when a transaction is closed, as my eye was, and there is no chance of reversing the conditions, then I believe in taking it as one does the everyday ills of life which are forgotten on the morrow."

"In other words," said I, "the Doctor does not believe in wasting tears over a pail of spilled milk when

the grocer will sell you cans of the condensed article, if you have the price."

"Exactly so," the Colonel replied; "but all men's minds are not built on the Mark Tapley model." And he was silent for some minutes. I fancied that he was thinking of his son George, who was killed before Atlanta, and his younger son, Terrill, who was wounded at Port Hudson and came home to die. Perhaps the Doctor thought this, but our eyes never met while our host was meditating. Soon he remarked: "It is not wise to meddle with any large wild animal that has been shot and seems to be dead. Of course, that is an axiom which is as plain as that two and two make four, but men forget it, just as Dr. Gordon did when he exchanged an eye for a swan's foot. We all make blunders, and I never grieve over them. They are personal matters that could have been avoided; but——"

"Now, Colonel, let me bathe your ankle again," said the Doctor, and he did it; "you were going to tell us a story of some kind about wounded animals. Let us have it."

"Yes, yes, I forgot; pardon me. It was just an ordinary deer hunt in the swamps and canebrakes, when I was a boy of fourteen, just the age of my grandson, 'Jack,' who seems to be the Major's favorite. Let's see, that was long ago; but I remember that it was the year in which Andrew Jackson was installed President for the second time."

"In 1833," said the Doctor.

"It was in November of that year, and I was a boy of fourteen, as I said, and my father organized a big deer hunt. Deer have always been plenty about here; but in those days there were more than now, and all the planters were sportsmen, and each would have a meet on their own estates once a year, and join in a grand time. There would be fifty or sixty men from perhaps twenty plantations, a hundred or more hounds and some dogs of mixed ancestry, with drivers, body-servants and an assortment of darky boys of all ages, who managed to get leave to come on one pretext or another. On such a hunt there might, during the three days it usually lasted, be fifty or sixty deer killed. They were gathered by the negroes and after being dressed were taken back to the plantation. The dogs were fed on the neck and fore quarters, so that at the grand barbecue on the last night there was no meat wasted.

"I had learned to use a rifle, and had obtained consent to go with the party on my first hunt. When I mounted my horse, as the head huntsman blew his horn that morning, I wondered why the party was so slow in starting. It seemed hours; it may have been twenty minutes. The dogs, strangers to each other, were fighting and the negro drivers were plying their whips, and all was excitement. Finally, father and his friends came out of the house, leaped to their saddles, and we started.

"Then I noticed that the party was divided into four sections, and that two of the drivers were white men, overseers on the plantations, who loved the hunt. As we were from six to ten miles west of Alexandria, on Red River, the parties took the four points of the compass. We went west to the first cross-road, and then turned south, and the dogs of our division were put out. A dog here and there bayed on a cold track, and the different packs of dogs seemed to separate from the dogs that they did not know. Here was a pack from one plantation in full cry on a fresh track, there were several hounds tonguing in an uncertain manner, while yonder was an occasional note from a hound on a cold track, but who had hopes. Men had galloped down this road and up that until I was bewildered. I fully understood that each horseman was to use his own judgment and keep the roads parallel to the movements of the hounds when the deer were in the canebrakes or the thickets, keeping ahead of the hounds and only joining in the chase when the deer took to the tall timber or the open country, where a man could ride. We proposed to shoot the deer and not to have the hounds run it down, in the English fashion, hence every gentleman carried a rifle.

"I had been keeping in advance of some hounds on my right, which were running in brake and thicket, when I came to a cross-road and went down it a few rods, thinking to get a running shot as the

deer crossed. A great oak on my right, close to a rail fence, gave a grand shade, and here I could see the deer as he crossed the road within shot, as it appeared, from the voices of the hounds. My rifle lay easily across the saddle, and I felt sure of a shot on the jump, hit or miss. My horse had the rein on his neck and was nibbling the grass. Like lightning from a clear sky, there was a crash, a start, and I knew no more.

"When my senses returned I was in bed with a broken leg, a broken arm and the scalp from the back of my head torn loose. I learned that a big buck had leaped the fence where my horse was grazing under the oak and had cut his quarter with a hoof, and this naturally started him on a run. I was thrown and dragged, but, fortunately, I wore low shoes, and the left one, which hung in the stirrup while my scalp was torn, came off and left me in the road until I was picked up. The horse had given me quite a severe cut, and I spent some weeks in bed with the broken bones, and that's all there is of the story."

"Colonel," said I, "your story lacks a proper ending. There should have been a historian there to picture the grand barbecue which wound up the hunt. The deep pit with glowing coals, which were the result of cords of wood burned while you were hunting, the wagon-loads of roasting ears and all the accessories of a grand barbecue, including the songs

of the darkies and their feasting and dancing. As a wind-up, that part of the programme is a fitting afterpiece, not exciting, like the hunt, but more amusing."

"My idea exactly," the Doctor remarked; "but from what you say it is evident that your notions of the sequence of amusements is that of a past age, for now there is no afterpiece at the theatre. When I was a boy not many years older than you, the play was the thing, the *piece de resistance*, and a farce followed as dessert. At the old Bowery Theatre I remember Ned Forrest in the tragedy of 'Jack Cade,' followed by the farce of 'Lend Me Five Shillings,' but if those plays were billed to-day the order would be reversed, and the farce would be called a 'curtain raiser.' There are tastes in matters theatrical as well as in other things. For instance, see how the minstrels have departed from the original darky songs and humor until——"

Here the Colonel broke in with "The theatre is all right if the play is good, but I went to see some minstrels once and found a lot of white men who had blackened their faces, and one of their songs was :

'My darling Nellie Gray,
They have taken her away,
And I'll never see my darling any more.'

That was too much for me, and I left my seat in disgust."

The Doctor winked his good eye at me and asked :
"Wasn't the singing good?"

"The voices were excellent, sir ; but the sentiment ! The idea, sir, of such a thing ; making a heroine out of a colored woman may be all right in some places, but not in Louisiana, sir." And the Colonel groaned at the pain in his ankle, which he had disturbed, and the Doctor attended to it.

The Doctor had, as we became acquainted, dropped the dignified "sir" when he addressed me, and I was amused to see how the Colonel quickly assumed it when he was disturbed. And then the Doctor was familiar with "the old Bowery pit" in his youth—in those days when the Bowery represented all that was picturesque in New York City ; when Chanfrau played "Mose," the rowdy volunteer fireman, and when the "pit," now the orchestra circle, was the cheapest part of the house. I looked at the Doctor curiously, but dropped my eyes when his met them. The riddle was unsolved.

"There will be a corn-shucking to-morrow night," said the Colonel, "and as both of you seem to be fond of that sort of thing, I propose that you go. It will be on the next plantation, and hardly a half hour's ride. No, no ; never mind me," at a motion made by the Doctor to say something. "Old Tom will only be too glad to come up and bathe my ankle and spend the evening here until you return."

CHAPTER VI.

"SHUCKIN' OB DE CAWN."

WE passed the next day riding, pitching quoits with the boys and in playing cribbage. The young moon was just visible before it followed its master below the horizon as we four mounted our horses and started for the shucking. The boys were naturally in the lead, but we older men walked our horses and talked, I ever on the alert to solve the problem.

Said the Doctor: "Of course you have seen that the Colonel's world is narrow and is bounded by prejudice on all sides."

"Partly true," I replied; "but he is not as narrow in his views as you may think, nor are his prejudices as strong as you judge them. In proof of this I am here as his guest, and I am what is called a 'Yankee,' who fought in a war which cost him his two sons and left him almost a financial wreck. No, Doctor, I reject your estimate of the Colonel, although you are an old-time friend of his, while I have known him barely a fortnight. He has strong prejudices, and most men have the same. His are in the direction of his personal afflictions and are so natural that I have the greatest respect for them. He lost every-

thing he held dear in a cause which he espoused heart and soul, and when I try to put myself in his place, and to think as he thinks, I am not a bit intolerant of his opinions, although I do not agree with them."

Then, for the first time, I became aware that the Doctor was studying me; that was a proposition that had not been thought of, but now that it was evident that I was regarded curiously, I hastened to dispel any mystery about myself, for there was none.

"May I ask how you, a Yankee soldier, came to be the guest of Col. B., and not only his guest, but also holding the esteem of his widowed daughter, Mrs. H., who has told me that you have roused her father from his despondency, and thereby, as one might say, brought sunshine into the household?"

"Nothing easier to answer. I happened to come down on a Red River steamer with the Colonel some weeks ago, when he refused my advances on the forward deck. Then a little girl fell overboard, and I jumped in and brought her out. The Colonel saw it, and asked me to his room to dry off and take something hot; and while doing these things I happened to tell him some old stories, new to him, and he opened his house to me. As he was fully aware of my service in the Civil War, I deny your allegation that he is narrow-minded and that his world is bounded by prejudice, and in the terms of the ancient joke, 'I defy the allegator.' You are more a man of the world than the Colonel, but the Colonel has also

the trait of discriminating between a cause and an individual, as is instanced in 'David Copperfield.' "

"I see," said the Doctor; "you are welcome as a man and a sportsman, who has by some means or other raised our host out of the depths of himself. His daughter has said as much, and I add my testimony to hers. I come down here occasionally in the hunting season, but not since the war began have I seen the Colonel laugh before last night. You must stay here until he can get out of bed, and we'll do a little shooting."

"Can't do it, Doctor, much as I would be pleased to; but I am not here for pleasure, as you are, but have duties to perform for my employers, although I am allowed the largest liberty in the disposition of my time, and while I have finished my work on Catahoula Lake, I must go to the rivers flowing into Lake Pontchartrain and collect the aquatic fauna there."

By this time we came in sight of the great fire where the corn-shucking was to be held, and our interest centered in that. Pausing on a mound, we could see the torches of bands of negroes which were coming from the different plantations, and occasionally could hear a note or two of their chants as the light wind drifted them our way.

The Doctor started on, and I followed. We neared the plantation and he halted and said: "There'll be more fun to-night than you'd find at a

dozen wakes." The problem again confronted me. "Wakes" are a remnant of Irish heathenism which the Catholic Church has not been able to eradicate. The wake may occur, but is not common in the South, and again I marked Dr. Gordon down as from New York or the East, for the Irish had hardly penetrated beyond Chicago in those days. I was noting every word he uttered.

When we gave our bridles to the boys we were welcomed in true Southern hospitable style, a style which was in vogue in the North when the same conditions prevailed, for civilized man is the same the world over.

In isolated communities a man who bears the stamp of a gentleman is welcome; in urban districts he must prove his title.

The boys had heralded our approach, and as guests of Col. B. nothing was too good for us.

The proprietor of the plantation where the corn-shucking was to come off was a young man, not over forty, but he seemed older. There is something in the isolation of a man from his fellows, or at least those whom he considers to be his fellows, which tends to age him. He gets into a habit of self-communion, a sort of introspection or whatever you may term it, that makes him feel himself to be a special creation and on an entirely different plane from that of other men. We see this in all the old woodsmen whom we employ as guides, and who live in seclu-

sion for more than half of each year. It is also noticeable in the isolated Southern planter, who makes stated visits to his neighbors for social purposes, and who, surrounded by hundreds of human beings, leads a lonesome life.

My notes are blurred as to names, but memory retains the facts and the scenes, and I drop the notes in the waste basket. The name of our host for the evening is lost, so as his cognomen is now an unknown quantity, I will call him Mr. X. He insisted on our coming into the house and keeping in reach of the sideboard, but the boys, George and Jack, were too young to care for the sideboard, and the Doctor and I preferred to see the darky bands arrive and hear the greetings.

"Here we is, fum General Cole's plantation; how you does, Unc' Pete? An' dere's ol' Unc' John from Vernon Parish, an' I ain' shuck yo' han' since de las' shuckin' awn Cunnel Law's plantation las' yeah; I'se pow'ful glad fo' to see yo' all. An' heah's Aunt Liza, the bes' possum cook in de whole parish; we got twenty fo' you, Liza, an' yo' mus' do yo' bes' awn 'em to-night. Well, I 'clar', ef dah ain' dat little buck-dancin' Sam! Say, Sam, yo' mus' rub a extra lot o' rawsin awn yo' feet to-night, fo' dey's a buck-dancah from Vernon come to contes' wid yo' to-night, an' dey say he can lay yo' out. Dey's to be some contes' in straight jiggin', but yo' ain' in dat, an' I don't know who dey is. Good ebenin', Miss

Melindy. I wants to shake a foot wid yo' w'en de shuckin's done; I spec' I'm awn time."

This was a sample of the talk as I caught it, but the names are not those of the locality. They are lost, but we must have names to tell the story.

Parties streamed in with torch and song until there were at least 300 negroes, 100 women and a lot of pickaninnies, not taxed. We were on the alluvial side of the Red River, where corn and sugarcane grew in profusion, and some distance north of the rice country. There was a mountain of corn in the husk, or "shuck," as they call it South, and when the forces gathered to attack it there seemed no prospect of its being done in one night. But I had not seen a Southern corn-shucking. It was, in its quick work, somewhat like a "raising-bee" at the North, where the neighbors put up a man's house or barn from material already prepared, and it arises like Aladdin's palace.

When all was ready a very dark and very large darky climbed to the ridge of the long pile of corn and called out: "Now we begin, an' yo' mus' all pay 'tention to de shuckin' an' to de song, an' not do any talkin' w'ile yo's a-shuckin', fo' yo' can talk w'en it's done. Now begin!" and he sang:

"De cawn's in de shuck, but we gwine to get him out,

O, roun' up, roun' up de cawn.

An' de possum's in de gum tree, but we gwine to get him out,

O, roun' up, roun' up de cawn.

"W'en de cawn's in de tossel, an' de punkin's in de bloom,
O, roun' up, roun' up de cawn.
Den de darky take a res' an' he watch de harves' moon,
O, keep on a-roundin' up de cawn.

"Den skin off de shuck an' tear out his heart,
But keep awn roundin' up de cawn;
Tell de gals an' boys not to make too much noise
W'en dey keeps awn a-roundin' up de cawn.

"I got a li'l' yallo' gal, she gwine dance wid me
W'en we dun froo roundin' up de cawn,
An' I tell all yo' udder boys yo' jes' let her be
W'en we's dun froo a-roundin' up de cawn."

There were yards, rods and furlongs of this verse, and Jake seemed competent to spin it out forever. Doctor Gordon and I stood and listened to it in a spirit that I dare not describe as ecstasy, but will merely say that it was a thing to our mutual taste. The firelight, the picturesque costumes, which were heightened by that light, and the quaint songs and chorus in the rich voices were beyond description. Mr. X. and the other white men occasionally looked on, but the Doctor and I seldom left it.

The problem of the Doctor's nativity was far from being solved, and I loved to work on it. He was an American, surely, but so much a man of the world that he had words, phrases and other characteristics of all parts of the country. At the side-board he expressed a preference for "red likkah," and I credited him to Kentucky, but when he spoke

of the heavy dew and called it "doo" I put him down as from the North.

"Doctor," said I, "these darky songs seem to interest us more than they do the other guests, but I suppose it's an everyday matter with them, at least the peculiarities of the plantation darky don't interest them."

"True, they do not, for to them they are not peculiarities, but common everyday traits. They live among these people so much that they never think them at all out of the common."

Then came a mighty shout from hundreds of throats, hundreds of ears of corn were tossed in the air and then followed a stampede to the barbecue. The last ear had been shucked and tossed into the great pen, which was literally rounded up, as the singer and his chorus had advised. The Doctor and I agreed that we preferred to go to the barbecue, but the host had invited us into the house, where a dozen of us sat down to a midnight dinner, which began with a clear soup, rippled over olives and celery, held a large boiled fish awhile in a pool, then meandered over venison chops and finally ran into a great roasted wild turkey. The flow was aided and abetted by juices of various grapes, but I was wrecked on an enormous plum pudding, and could go no further; the Doctor also stopped at this point. Such a dinner, at such an hour, needs a stronger stomach than mine; but I ate it, all but the pudding, and, fortu-

nately, there was no room left for that most indigestible mass. The other articles were tempting, and then one "may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb," and what if I did suffer some for a few days? One has to pay for all good things in this world.

After we had left the table the Doctor proposed that we should go to the barbecue, and I and two others agreed. The rest preferred to sit on the porch with their feet on the rail and smoke. We saw the pits and the great spits resting in crotches, with cranks and ropes to hold the spits from turning with their burdens of quarters of beef, whole hogs and sheep, which had been roasting over live coals. A few pickaninnies were feasting on the remains with great gusto, for there was plenty left. But we heard shouting back near the shucking-place and the mansion and turned toward it and found that the dancing had begun. Mr. X. gave me the number of pounds of beef, pork and mutton, and I recorded the information in my notes, which were thrown away. I hate statistics, and am not sorry; all I remember is that there were twenty possums, and these were reserved for a favored few by the master of ceremonies.

Cotillions were first in order, on the smooth, hard-beaten ground, and then the old fiddler appeared. Old, frosty-headed and lame, he did not promise much music to the eye, but as he slowly mounted the

platform, which had been put up about three feet high for the jig and the buck dancers, he realized his importance, and spent much time in tuning up, for it would never have suited his dignity to have done this in private; he called: "All ready"; the master of ceremonies shouted: "Gran' salute!" and he shook "Gray Eagle" out of that fiddle in great shape.

"I 'clar' to goodness, Miss Lucinda, yo' does dat pigeon-wing de bestes' I ebbah seed, yo' does, fo' a fac'."

"Go 'long, Sam, yo' is allus flatiron; yo' know yo' does de wing to 'fection, an' I jess try to pattenise aftah yo'."

The old fiddler played the bass with his boot, and the time was perfect. He shifted off to "Money Musk" and "Devil's Dream," and, as the Doctor said, was "no slouch."

This remark placed the Doctor in Chicago.

Two more "cowtillions" and a Virginia reel followed, and the "ladies" retired, for the night had waned perceptibly. Then the master of ceremonies vociferously announced: "Dey's a buck dancah fum Vernon Parish come heah to-night to dance ouah Sam. Dey is a prize o' five dollahs, an' Col. X. is gwine to 'p'int three w'ite men judges. Any man w'at wants to bet awn hees man, I'll hole de stake."

Our host had seen that the Doctor and I had a taste for this kind of amusement and proposed that we be two of the three judges. "My dear sir," I re-

plied, "I feel fully competent to judge a straight jig, but I do not even know what buck-dancing is."

"I know," said the Doctor, "and your ear for rhythm and knowledge of the intricacy of the straight jig will make you a competent judge. Of course the straight jig is the ideal dance, the neatest, cleanest expression of music by the human foot. It makes no claim to a 'poetry of motion,' but it is a dance to be heard as well as seen. The buck dance is of the same order, but coarser, and the dancer moves all over the stage. Accept and be a judge."

Sam came forward and proclaimed himself as the champion buck-dancer. He was followed by a slim fellow from Vernon, and they shook hands after the manner of prize-fighters, to show that there was no ill feeling. A Mr. Petro, from New Orleans, had joined us as a judge. He understood the dance, and we made him referee. He called the dancers and warned them that wing steps, all straight jig steps, such as "weed corn," "kiver taters," etc., would be discounted, and the contestants retired to rub the soles of their bare feet with rosin. Four minutes was allotted to each, and the tune was something in the jerky time of "Johnny Get Yer Gun, Gitcher Gun," and the boys put in their best licks. Sam was the winner, and insisted on showing a few more steps that time did not permit him to bring in. I was greatly interested in this, because it was a characteristic dance, evidently evolved by the plantation

negro. It is common now in the music halls of the North. It was rhythmical, sometimes graceful and at others grotesque, as suited the fancy of the performer.

The more delicate straight jig, danced in thin-soled shoes on a sanded floor, is not a negro dance. What he has of it he has learned from such minstrels as travel with the "kid shows" of a circus, and the performer tries to hold the same spot and move nothing but his legs, while he puts in light doubles and triples; but these boys were not light of foot, and the Doctor said to me: "Old as I am, I can do better than that, at least I believe I can." And I replied: "If it was not *infra dig*, I'd like to show these boys a few things in that line, for once upon a time——"

"We'll have it out when we get back to the Colonel's," said the Doctor, and the boys agreed to remind us of the promise.

It was daylight and raining when we reached the Colonel's mansion, and throwing our bridles to some of the men, we went to bed, our two boys being hardly able to keep awake until their room was reached. We met at an evening dinner, where the boys were the only ones whose digestions had not been impaired by the great midnight dinner, and as they alone of our party had tackled the plum pudding, the Doctor and I caught each other watching them eat and knew that we both were wondering at what a boy's stomach could assimilate and were

harking back to our boyhood days, when we could stow away any reasonable or unreasonable quantity of boiled dough in the shape of plum pudding or in its other forms of "dumplings," things we now regarded as either instant death or long sickness.

Old Tom was in the Colonel's room, where he had been since we left him the night before. The Doctor unbandaged the ankle and said: "Tom, you have done well; the inflammation has gone down wonderfully. I don't know but I had best go and leave you in charge."

"Yes," said the Colonel, "if I stirred in the night the faithful old man was by me, ready to dress my ankle; but it has been a long day. Pull up your chairs and tell me about the shuckin'."

"Thank yo,' sah," said Tom as he closed the door; but to this day I do not know whether it was for the Doctor's compliment or for what I thought I saw slipped into the old man's hand. Experience has taught me that there are a few things which are none of my business.

The rain beat on the windows in sheets and there was a monotonous drip, drip down the chimney. Said the Colonel: "Old Tom says that it will rain for three days. He saw the cat wash its face three times last night, and the rain-bird—the cuckoo—called three times to-day. Often the old man is right, for he watches these things, but the cat might have performed its ablutions when he was not look-

ing at it, and the cuckoo probably called many times when his ear did not record it, but it is about time for several days' rain, and I will be the gainer by having you indoors."

The boys went back to bed. They outclassed us on eating and sleeping, but we were in good condition to spend the evening with the Colonel. The Doctor no longer called me "sir" in every sentence, and we sat up with the Colonel until "the wee sma' hours ayont the twal," and spent three days in talk, cribbage and chess, not forgetting the jig-dancing, which we had forgotten, but which the boys could not be induced to forget.

CHAPTER VII.

FISHING FOR CRAPPIES.

THE rain held on three long days, and while the company was congenial I had ever in mind that I had duties to perform. I explained my collecting mission to the Doctor and the boys, as a reason for my leaving them at an early day, and that, while I was not expected to collect ten hours a day, rain or shine, I had scruples about using too much time in the way last week was spent.

Said George: "We've been talking of this, and the Doctor says that you can collect a whole lot of small life over on our pond, if you will go fishing with us. What are the funny names you told me he could collect, Doctor?"

Evidently there had been a deep and dark conspiracy against me, and the Doctor was the chief criminal, who had intrusted the details to an inexperienced boy, and the boy had, in police parlance, "given him away."

"Doctor," said I, "this is a surprise, and——"

"Well, it has turned out so; but the morning is clear, and we have it all arranged to go to the pond and fish. The horses are at the door, so get your rods and tackle, and we'll be off, and I will only say: You can collect the fresh-water mollusks and crusta-

ceans, which you said you had not done, while we fish. You need not fish, but may go on with your collecting; we will not interfere."

"Yes," Jack interpolated, "and if any of these—what's 'e'r names?—is too big for you to handle, we'll all help you take care of them."

The pond was an enlargement of the stream which ran back of Col. B.'s plantation and down into the Red River. It was about a mile long and a half as wide. There were three boats, and I took a darky boy in one for collecting specimens for Prof. Baird, while the Doctor and Jack took another, and George and a darky took the third. I kept to the shore, and with rake and fine-meshed dip-net took in all the life in sight. The boy who rowed me opened his eyes in astonishment at the harvest. "Well, I done 'clar'! Nebba see such cu'ious t'ing befo'. He got big eyes an' laigs an' looks like a heap o' dirt. W'at's he good fo'?"

"Do you see that dragon-fly on your oar?"

"Yes, sah; dat's a debbil's darnin' needle. I knows him fo' shuah."

"Well, this thing will change into that big fly next year. It will come out of the water, fly around and lay its eggs, which will hatch into crawlers like this and then die. The crawlers will turn into devil's darning needles the next year, and so they keep it up."

"How does dat crawlah turn into a debbil's darn-

in' needle? He doan look laik it. An' how does—but I 'spect yo' want to hab some fun wid a po' fool niggah, an' so it's all right."

The boy amused me with his skepticism, and instead of trying to teach him facts in animal transformation I told him that the fresh-water mussels traveled down to salt water and became oysters. I became an authority on oysters in his opinion. The temptation was too great to be resisted. He refused my fact, but accepted the fiction, because one seemed impossible and the other looked probable. If he is living to-day he knows that after the first frost the frogs get wings in one night and fly away, to return in spring; that ghosts never go out on rainy nights and other interesting facts in nature. His mind was well stored with an assortment of knowledge in the zoological line that day.

With a collection of invertebrates, consisting of many kinds of mollusks, some crustaceans and a lot of insect larvæ, we stopped work and joined the anglers. They had struck the right spot for crappies, and while the most of them were the big-mouthed species, they had three of the other kind, *P. sparoides*, which is more common in the North, and I was glad to note it. I fished with them for an hour, and then we started for home. I had taken about fifteen, and was surprised to see that they had over two bushels of fish, mainly crappies, and those many species of the sunfish which shade off into the

rock bass, or red-eye, warmouth, etc., so common there.

"Oh, no," said the Doctor, in reply to a question; "there will be no waste. You overlook the colored contingent, which will use every fish that is left after our small family is provided for."

"Yes, and we let a lot go," said George, "because they were red-horse and suckers, and it is not cold enough to eat them now; they're too soft."

"An' we'd 'a' had more only I got snagged in the tree-top three times," said Jack, "and lost time when they were biting fast, an' then I got hold of a turtle 'at wouldn't come in for I don't know how long, and I had to cut the line and rig new hooks. We used up all the bait fish and then had to cut chunks out of suckers, and that took time, an' I think I lost a bushel of fish in that way."

"Jack," the Doctor slowly remarked, "we were not fishing against time, nor to see how many bushels of fish we could catch. Never regret the time lost in freeing your line, even if the fish are biting freely. Remember, my boy, that we do not want to catch the last fish in the pond, if we could, and that it would be a sin for us to take as many as we have if your grandfather did not have so many people to feed."

The Doctor looked my way, as if he wanted approval of his sermon. He got it in this way: "Jack, never take the life of any creature unless you need it

for food, clothing or other use, or because it injures you in some direct or indirect manner. Every insect, bird, beast, fish or reptile is part of Nature's great balance wheel in keeping down other forms of animal or vegetable life. Destroy the pond and river fishes and the turtles would starve, the frogs would multiply until they had devoured all the insects which either destroy vegetation or act as a check upon those which do, and the entire balance is upset. Even an alligator has its uses, Jack, in the economy of Nature. I don't mean in furnishing man with purses and things from its skin, nor jewelry from its teeth, but in keeping down other forms of life.

"Look at our little summer yellowbird, Jack; the American goldfinch. Its mission is to keep down the thistle by feeding on its seeds; the woodpecker destroys the grub, which in turn would destroy our forests, and the swallow, the martin, the bull bat, the whippoorwill and the bat keep down the innumerable hordes of insects which would make life a torment for us but for their unceasing work, night and day; and it is the same all through animal life, down to the earthworm.

"Jack, I want you to give this matter some serious thought, for it deserves it, and please do not hate me for putting these things before you in this way. I fully realize that it is not a boy's way of looking at the sport of shooting and fishing, and will confess

that it was not my way of viewing it when I was your age, and I thought it my right and privilege to kill every living thing that came in my way. I have learned better in the course of time. I have come to know that man is only one in the great plan of Nature, and that he is dependent for his existence on the balance which is kept up among what he is pleased to call the lower forms of life, even down to the angle worm with which you catch a fish. Do you follow me, Jack?"

"Oh, yes; and I suppose it's all true. But when I go to hunt or fish I want all I can get, and I have no time to speculate on the balance of life or on any other theory."

"Boy fashion," remarked the Doctor; "but the seed has not fallen on barren ground. It will take root in time."

When we reached the mansion it was near dinner time. The boys selected the fish for the family breakfast, all crappies, and gave the rest to be divided among the help. When we had made ourselves presentable for the table the Colonel was also presentable, for old Tom had dressed him, hunted up a pair of crutches, and there he was. Said he: "Tom is a better nurse than Dr. Gordon, for he does what I tell him to do, while the Doctor gives me orders to obey. If the Doctor had been here to-day I would have been kept in bed just to show me that I was under his orders, and with only a slightly sprained

ankle. No, sir! Tom is a good enough nurse for me, and here I am."

The Doctor made no reply, but Mrs. H. said: "I told father that it might be injudicious for him to get out of bed so soon, even though he does not touch the injured foot to the floor. I told him, Doctor, that he had better await your coming and advice, and what do you think he said?"

"I can't imagine."

"He looked at me in a pitying sort of way and replied: 'My dear girl, it's very kind of you, and you mean well, but don't know, and Dr. Gordon also means well. But this is my ankle that is sprained, and I know how it feels much better than Dr. Gordon does—and I've ordered Tom to brush my clothes, get crutches and I will be with you at dinner.' Now, Doctor, what can be done with a patient, or an impatient, like that? I believe you take two lumps, Doctor."

"If you please. Don't worry about your father; I'll talk with him to-night in his room."

"Very well; and I think you take your tea clear, Major, do you not?"

"Yes, thanks, I take it straight; I beg pardon, I mean clear."

The Colonel was in fine fettle when we assembled in his room after dinner. He had defied the Doctor and virtually turned the case over to old Tom, who slept on a cot in a spare room next the Colonel,

where he had his meals sent from the family table, and that was good enough for him. The boys were allowed to be with us until 10 o'clock, and we were five, in council.

After a general talk on the events of the day I spoke my piece in this manner: "Colonel B., I have no words to thank you for * * *. That such a trifling incident as that on the Red River steamer should cause you to open your house to me as a guest seems like fiction. In a review of the events which are recent history it seems like a dream; but one of those happy dreams which we cherish and wish might come true. I must leave you. * * *"

Then the Colonel said something which I would not like to repeat, but it ended in an intimation that I would be welcome under his roof at any time.

Jack broke in, boy fashion, and asked: "When must you go?"

"Day after to-morrow, my boy."

"Then let's have another hunt! What shall it be—deer, turkeys or bears?"

"Why not partridges?" asked George.

"There's lots of 'em in the berry patches," Jack replied, "and the old orchard and the cornfields are full."

"All right, boys, I will hunt partridges with you to-morrow, and then I must leave."

"Before we go to bed, please tell us what that funny name is you have for partridges in your country?"

"We call them quail."

"Oh, yes! Good night!"

Said the Doctor: "May I ask you where you drift to when you leave us?"

"Certainly. I go to look over the drowned lands where Red River, when in flood, overflows into the Atchafalaya, and then down into the rice country and into the brackish water, then home."

The Doctor thought a moment and remarked: "The Colonel is doing well, and it is safe to predict that he will not go on another bear hunt until I return. He will be glad to get rid of me, won't you, Colonel?"

"Since you put it in that form, and dare me to say it, I will say yes; but come back on the old terms of friendship as soon as you can."

CHAPTER VIII.

SHOOTING IN THE BERRY PATCH.

Low voices in the next room wove into dreams, and the dreams were of guns, filling shot pouches and preparations for a day with birds, sometimes with the ducks, which suddenly changed into plover, and then with turkeys, which somehow vanished before they were fairly sighted. One peculiarity of my dreams has been persistent from boyhood. When I dream of shooting, and the game is there, I pull the trigger, but the gun does not go off. I have often wondered if this happens to other dreamers. It is the day of the muzzle-loader that I am writing about, and as I was thirty-five years old before I saw a breech-loader, and have but little experience with them, it is natural that there should be a cap to miss fire in my dreams.

The voices became louder and the dream more indistinct.

"The fisher droppeth his net in the stream,
And a hundred streams are the same as one;
And the maiden dreameth her love-lit dream,
And what is it all, when all is done?
The net of the fisher the burden breaks,
And always the dreaming the dreamer wakes."

So it was; the dreaming came to a point when I

was conscious, and then a voice said: "I don't care if I wake the whole house up. You took more'n half of the powder and shot when you filled your flasks and turned over what was left to me. Here are about a dozen wads left to me, while you have your pockets full, and I'll make you even up on the whole lot before we start."

Surely that was the voice of my young friend Jack, talking to his older brother. Something in his tone indicated that he considered himself imposed upon. By the light of a match my watch said that the night had just turned three, and daylight was more than an hour away. Wondering why boys were so enthusiastic, and in my sleepy condition forgetting that I had passed through that same embryonic stage, I tapped on their door and told Jack to go to bed and I would see that he had a proper outfit in the morning, but that if he should wake his grandfather it might anger him so that the boys would not be allowed to go with us. After that the stars could not have moved with more silence, and sleep came, only to be roused by its enemy, the sun.

At breakfast those boys bolted their food without tasting it. How I envy the stomach of a boy! He does not know that he has such an organ, or that he is abusing it in ways that will present claims for damages in the time to come, when he will scan the advertisements of dyspepsia cures which bring promise to his eye, but break it to his hope.

The setters, Bob and Dan, who were with us on the woodcock trip, and who had retired in disgust when the horn sounded to assemble all the plantation curs for a bear hunt, were on the porch with the boys, licking their hands and wagging their tails as if to say: "Why do you wait? We are ready; let's start." When the Doctor and I appeared, the intelligent dogs reasoned that the wait was past, and we were greeted with an effusiveness that plainly said: "So you have come at last. We've been waiting for you, but it's all right now."

We mounted our horses. I had ceased to wonder why men in the South preferred to mount a horse and have their inwards churned into chaos instead of quietly riding in some sort of wheeled vehicle as do all the farmers in the North. They liked it because they were not accustomed to the "effete" luxury of the "buggy" or the "coach." And then a saddle is cheaper than a buggy, and in early times this was an object, but let me prophesy: A century hence a saddle will not be in use in the United States, except in regions remote from the great centers of civilization, in the army and among those who take to horseback riding as an athletic sport. It is an acquired taste that is easily lost by a sportsman who once shoots plover or other game from a buggy. The saddle gives more exercise than we, who were not brought up to it, think we need, and it will go out of use in the West and South as it has done in the

East. It is a laborious form of getting over the ground that will be abandoned by those who can afford to ride on wheels.

The horse that I rode on this occasion was one of those gentle-gaited Kentucky horses, and I got along well; but if I had choice of a journey through Hades over the house-tops, or a trotting horse on a level road, the horse would be left behind. If the verdict be that I am no horseman, I will not appeal. Few Northern men are brought up in the saddle, and that was the reason that the Confederate cavalry were our superiors in that branch of the service during the first two years of our Civil War.

Years before, a fire had run through a patch of timber, and some 200 acres of stubs, stumps and dead trees bore witness to it, but Dame Nature will not permit a rich soil to remain unproductive, and with the sunlight came the berries, few at first, from the droppings of birds, and next year there was a struggle for life among different kinds of weeds, vines and young trees. Here was a spot where the cat-briers, called "bamboo" in the South, had the ascendancy, and neither man nor dog could pass their stronghold. There the different edible berries of the brier kind had possession, and held on to the sportsman as death is said to detain a deceased African. But there were arches of these vines here and there that the dogs could pass under, and might stand on game until Cuba froze over—I think I

mean Cuba—and the sportsman would never know it. Then there were something like avenues of weeds which wound about these patches, and through which a man could pass, the taller ones kindly yielding to him and shedding their seeds between his shirt and skin, where they seemed to feel no discomfort if he did. The day was warm, for it was November, the still air and the exercise induced perspiration, and the seeds down both front and back on a moist skin are still held in memory's locker.

Jack was with me, and George with the Doctor, as before. We had killed a few quail out of many that the dogs found, and had a fair proportion of birds killed, considering the conditions. The lay of the brier patches forced us together, and the Doctor said: "Really, I don't care much for this work. What do you think of it?"

"My dear Doctor," I answered, "you don't care much for it; the boys may like it, for boys are easily pleased; the dogs are enthusiastic, although their hides are pricked and torn; but since you ask me for an opinion, I will say that if this is the only place in Louisiana where quail can be found, I am content to leave it to them. I have known men who were as enthusiastic as the dogs, and who would suffer to be frozen in a sink-box to kill a few ducks, or to wade a cold stream up to their waists to kill a trout or a salmon. We can never measure the mind of another man in our quart cup; if I think they do these things

to brag about, I may not be mistaken, because my brain is not theirs. I would not do them now, but once would. To me sport means pleasure, and there is no pleasure in physical suffering, from my point of view; yet men have sought the musk ox when they had to give their scanty supply of food to their dogs as their only hope of reaching civilization alive. They deliberately put their lives in the balance before starting."

As we took the nearest route out of the brier patch the Doctor said: "Arctic explorers go with a full knowledge of the dangers before them, and so do other men. There is an old maxim, 'The greater the danger the greater the sport.' Did you ever risk your life for any reason?"

"Never mind; all these questions which you bring up a man will answer differently at different ages. Consult Shakespeare on that subject: In the fourth of man's seven ages he depicts him as 'seeking the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth,' but in later years he seldom cares for that kind of thing, and life, which he was ready to throw away at twenty, becomes the dearest thing on earth at four times that age."

"From this," rejoined the Doctor, "it would appear that you study man as well as fishes, and your observations coincide with mine. You know that Swift said: 'Every man desires to live long; but no man would be old.' See! our boys have the dogs

across the road and into the corn stubble, while we are philosophizing; we must catch up, yet it does me more good to see one of those eager boys down a partridge than to do it myself."

We spread out again, and I took my position on the right of Jack just as he brought down a quail over Dan's point, and the setter yelled; his "ki-yi's" rent the air, and the trouble with the dog was not apparent. No gash of cat-brier, cutting an inch deep, would extort such a yell from a well-bred dog in pursuit of game; no shot at a bird in the air could have struck him, but there he was at our feet, cowed and trembling. The Doctor and George rushed over; the dog still yelled, and the Doctor examined its feet for thorns or porcupine quills. Jack had gone off to look for his bird, and a minute later fired a shot and rushed in with a big rattlesnake, shouting: "The snake bit him!"

The dog was in agony, but was licking our hands, as if to say: "The trouble is not in my feet; why can't you understand?" We understood only after Jack had found the angry snake and had killed it. Then the Doctor looked elsewhere, and found the wound.

We held poor Dan down while the Doctor cut out a piece from his leg, and then cauterized it and put a ligature above the wound, for he was the kind of doctor who always had a few things in his saddle-bags to meet ordinary emergencies, and had

slung them over his shoulder when he left his horse to enter the berry patch.

The day's sport was over, one of our party had been bitten by a snake, and we must go home. The poor dog was weak and nauseated, and we carried him on a piece of bark to the road, where the Doctor took him in his saddle, a most uncomfortable way, but the best that offered. A short cut brought us home in twenty minutes, or about half an hour after Dan was bitten. He no longer vomited, but was very sick. As we laid our suffering companion on the porch, he was too feeble to acknowledge our attentions in his usual way, but his eyes beamed kindly on us. The Doctor had rushed up the stairs two steps at a time, and came down without noticing that steps were there. He gave the patient some whisky to arouse the heart action, took off the ligature and made another incision in the leg and applied some fluid to the new wound.

All this was of great interest to me, for it was the first case of snake-bite that I had seen, and as such a thing might come my way some time, it was worth while to study it, so for the benefit of others who may be exposed to this danger I give the details.

"Will Dan die?" Jack asked the Doctor.

"Not if I can help it, but much depends on his condition and the amount of poison he received. These are the main things on which his life depends. How old is he?"

"Four years old next month," George answered.

The Doctor looked the dog over and said, partly to himself and partly to us: "He is in his prime, and his physical condition is excellent; pulse a little better since he had the whisky, the general depression seems to be passing." Then, arousing from his meditation, he continued: "The next two hours will tell the story."

"Pardon me, Doctor," I ventured to ask, "that last incision and liquid application was puzzling to me; would it be impertinent to ask the nature of it? My apology for asking is that such an accident might happen to myself or any companion, canine or human, when no physician was at hand, and life was hanging in the balance. Of course I know that there is a popular belief that unlimited quantities of whisky will cure snake poison; you used but little on the dog. Will you be good enough to tell us all about this matter?"

"Certainly; we have no secret nostrums, but here is the Colonel's messenger, who says that dinner will be served in fifteen minutes, and we must prepare for that event. Poor Dan is lying quietly on his rug, and will remain there. We will talk about snake-bites in the Colonel's room to-night."

"Well, Jack," the Colonel asked, after the soup was served, "how were the partridges to-day?"

"They were plenty in the brier patches, but the dogs couldn't follow 'em, and they ran off, but we

got eleven brace and lost a lot in the thickets. Then we crossed the road, and had just got nicely to work in the corn stubble, when Dan was struck by a rattlesnake, and we had to quit and get him home. It was too bad. We couldn't see Dan die, but the birds were plenty, and we might have killed fifty brace if the snake had let Dan alone."

The Colonel told his grandson that he did not want fifty brace of partridges brought in, as he did not intend to feed his negroes on them. "Bring Dan to my room to-night," said he, "and we two invalids will console each other."

Dan, the setter, had not seen the Colonel since the bear hunt, and feebly tried to recognize him as he was brought into his room. Dr. Gordon gave the dog another small dose of whisky, which gave him strength, and he licked the Doctor's hand as soon as the fiery liquid allowed him to do so. That action decided the case: Dan would live.

"Now, Doctor," said I, "redeem your promise and tell us about poisoning from snake-bite. Don't be so technical that we can't follow you, but give it to us in a way to be of use." His talk on this subject was so full and interesting that I make no apology for giving it here as memory retains it, and I was wide awake on this subject, for, while most of the harmless snakes are kindly treated by me, and often made pets, the poisonous ones have ever been dreaded.

The Colonel lay upon his bed, and the snake-bitten

dog was lying by his side, with his head on the Colonel's arm—two crippled companions; one deprived of speech, but fuller of intelligence than many a man—and as we gathered there the Doctor said: "Snake poison acts in different ways, but there is no internal antidote that is efficient. The quart of whisky theory has believers because men have taken it and recovered, but they would have recovered without it; for rattlesnake bite is seldom fatal to man, while a small portion of the poison will kill a dog. The bite of the cobra, of India, is often fatal, for the reason that they are generally larger than our venomous serpents, and their poison is more potent. It has been proved that any animal can be rendered immune to snake poison by being subjected to small and increasing injections of it, but this form of poison is harmless when taken into the stomach, therefore you need never fear to suck the poison from a wound unless the skin of your lips is abraded. A quarter of a drop of rattlesnake poison in the veins of a pigeon will kill it, but pigeons have been fed twenty drops of it a day for a week, and have been unharmed.

"The effects of snake-bite are divided into local and general, the local being immediate and the other remote. In the case of Dan it was local, perhaps because I was present and confined the trouble to his leg as far as it was possible to do so. He was depressed and his heart action was feeble, that's why

I gave him a half ounce of whisky, just to increase the heart action and give him strength to resist the poison, and the ligature above the wound prevented a clot from reaching the heart, for that would be fatal, and snake poison tends to form a clot. If the early depression passes quickly the animal either recovers soon or passes into the second stage, in which the blood cannot clot, and every tissue is degraded, and bleeding from the mucous membranes begins and foreshadows a fatal end.

"You will notice that I first bandaged the leg above the wound, then enlarged the cuts to promote bleeding, in order to get rid of such venom as might not have passed into the circulation, and then cauterized the wound. That was the best I could do in the field, where my supplies were limited, but when we reached the mansion I reopened the wound, took off the ligature and applied a solution of permanganate of potassium, which destroys the poison and is the best of all remedies.*

* In justice to the medical profession I print the following letter from the Biological Department of Parke, Davis & Co.:

"DETROIT, MICH., U. S. A., Nov. 16, 1898.

"COL. FRED MATHER,

"DEAR SIR: I note in one of your recent contributions to *Forest and Stream* that while writing of events occurring twenty-five years ago you make the Doctor give a lecture on snake poison treatment, in which he states that by giving small repeated doses of the poison immunity is produced. Later on you speak of the antagonism of permanganate of potash to snake poisoning.

"Now I presume the facts are that you have written into the Doctor's lecture of twenty-five years ago any information

"Woodsmen have faith in tobacco, but, like the whisky, the man would have recovered without it. If no remedy is at hand, all local dressings are useless. Open the wound to encourage bleeding by washing, or soaking in hot water, and give a little alcohol to stimulate the heart. Snake-bite is dangerous in proportion to the size of the snake, its condition, and in the South, where the reptiles are more active, they are more deadly than in the North."

Dan was lying with his head on the Colonel's arm during this lecture, apparently sleeping, but when the Doctor had finished and went to see if the bleeding still continued under the loose bandage, placed to receive the blood, Dan raised his head and licked the Doctor's hand; the hand that had cut, burned, and dosed him with burning whisky. A wild animal would have resented such treatment, and would have

that you may happen to have to-day, since the permanganate treatment was only devised a few years ago. Of course this is perfectly allowable, but on the question of immunity we are very much interested. The first record of immunizing against snake poison that we have in recent times was that of Sewall in 1877. Lucanus, as well as Plinius, mention immunity to snake poison. If at the time you write of there was such information we would like very much to know it. We may say that it even has a possible bearing upon the questions of priority in the production of immunity which are now being raised in regard to antitoxins for diphtheria. If you can give us any definite information along this line we shall be very much obliged. Yours respectfully,

PARKE, DAVIS & Co."

In reply I said that after raking my memory with a fine-toothed comb, I could not be positive about the drug and may have, as intimated, worked in knowledge acquired later. Sometimes a quarter of a century renders such things uncertain.

bitten the hand that had caused it pain, but great-hearted Dan knew that his friends would only do what was best for him, and he trusted them. Was this instinct? Let those answer who believe that a high-bred dog cannot reason because his vocal chords are not developed sufficiently to speak our languages. That they understand such parts of our speech as are addressed to them needs no argument; but they go further, they reason.

When Dan licked the Doctor's hand while he was looking at the bandaged leg, the dog had to rise up and bend over, showing that he had some strength. We all noted it, and as the Doctor patted Dan's head, rubbed his ears, and said: "Dan, old boy, you'll be all right in the morning!" every one in the room stood in line to put a hand on his head and give him a rub at the base of an ear, a spot where it always pleases a dog to have a man's hand. Jack came last. He had never taken his eyes from the Doctor's face while the poison lecture was in progress, and we had not paid much attention to the boy. When he put his hand on Dan's head he broke down; he kissed the dog and cried, and then broke from the room, with Dan up on his fore feet trying to return the kisses. George followed Jack, and somehow I had need of a handkerchief, while the Colonel rolled over with his face to the wall, and the Doctor turned to the window to see what the night was like.

Some minutes elapsed before the Colonel broke

the silence with: "Doctor, my heart action is feeble; there are lemons and hot water, if you will be good enough to compound for all of us, as you have done for Dan. When I mentioned his name just now he began thrashing the bed with his tail, the first time he has used that appendage since his injury. If he is able to do it, please call him from the bed and show him the rug he is to sleep on, and then I will be ready to have my ankle dressed for the night."

The Doctor busied himself with the preparation of his heart vibrator for a while, and when it was blended to his satisfaction, he called loudly: "Dan, come down here!" The dog got up from the Colonel's arm, looked over the bed to the floor, and leaped down. "There's your bed," said the Doctor, pointing to a bear-skin rug, and Dan curled up on it for the night. If the dog obeyed from "instinct," I must confess to being ignorant of the difference between intelligence and what is called "instinct."

In the morning Dan greeted us all in the good old way. The Doctor and I had everything packed for our trip to the rice country, promises to write and to come again mingled with the good-byes, the carry-all was at the door, and we started to meet the steamer on Red River.

CHAPTER IX.

DOWN THE ATCHAFALAYA.

THOSE Southern steamboats are leisurely craft. If they do not reach a certain point to-day there is hope that they will on the morrow. Therefore one must be early and wait. We were at Alexandria about 10 A. M., and the boat was expected about noon, but no one knew when she might arrive. Strolling down to the levee, we found old Sam, who had been my *fidus Achates* during the week's fishing on Catahoula Lake. He had his great line out for catfish, and was fishing with a cane about twenty feet long for smaller fish. He had just unhooked a crappie and strung it through the gill covers and placed it in the water to keep alive, when I asked: "Well, Sam, how are they running now?"

"Well, I 'clar' ef heah ain' my Yankee Kunnel an' Doctah Gawdon too; it does my ole eyes good to see yo' bofe. Whah you bin all de time, Doctah? I ain' see yo' fo' many years, an' I 'membah yo' w'en yo's a little boy come heah to visit de ole Kunnel w'at's dead an' gone, long befo', an' yo' come wid you muddah fum Gawgy."

Here was a clue to the solution of my problem of Dr. Gordon's nativity; he was born a Georgian, and I stored that fact away.

"Sam, you are getting old," the Doctor remarked. "I was here last year, and brought you a ham and a bottle of gin for a Christmas present. Can't you remember as far back as that?"

"Wus dat las' yeah?"

"Certainly it was. I supposed that the ham would only last a few days, but the gin was well corked, and if only used for medicinal purposes, as I suggested, it could not evaporate, and you must have some of it left."

"I'se gettin' ole, fo' a fac', and can't 'membah good. I 'membah de ham, dat las' 'bout fo' days, but dattah gin, Doctah, was fo' 'dicinal puppus, an' I'se gettin' ol', an' wid de 'tism in de laigs an' misery pains in de haid an' back, dat gin nebbah got no time to 'vaporate, less de ol' woman got up in de night an' 'vaporate some, as I 'spec' she did w'en she got a smell o' de stuff, but hones', it didn' las' as long as de ham, it didn' fo' a fac'."

"Sam," I said, "the Doctor and I do not drink gin; in Yankeeland there is a saying that only women and darkies like it. Now, take this and go up and treat yourself, and I will fish for you."

"T'anks, Kunnel, I'm proud to have yo' 'quaintance, an' I 'member de good times awn Catahoula." With hat in hand, after the manner of the old-time darky, he left us in possession of his entire fishing outfit, without asking for security. Confidence was not a creature of slow growth with Sam. I have re-

corded how he left me in full charge of his fishing outfit, and went to the hotel at my expense and gave me that high compliment: "I know'd yo' was a gemman w'en I seed yo' get off de boat."

I took in quite a number of the small fishes which made their homes in Red River, without giving thought to other things, when the Doctor yelled: "There's a bite on the big line!"

I dropped the cane and rushed to help the Doctor. It was lug and tug, hand under hand, for more minutes than we kept a record of, and we landed a giant catfish. Just then Sam returned and killed the fish with the poll of an axe that he had for that purpose, and after a critical survey gave his opinion: "He's a big cat, fo' a fac', but I don' 'spec' he's so big as de one dat de Yankee Kunnel an' I got jess fo' we went to Catahoula Lake. How much did dattah fish weigh, Kunnel?"

"Just sixty-three and a half pounds."

"I doan jess 'membah de poun's, but I 'membah de two dollahs an' a half wot I got fo' him."

We went to dinner, which I afterward regretted. There we found a first course of fried crappies, which was good, one to each plate; then came an alleged "beefsteak," which might have grown on the neck or on the shin bone, and was fried with onions! If I were intrusted with the government of all the inhabitants of this world, I would select some quarter of the globe where good steak was rare (pun in-

tended), and there colonize all people who fry a beefsteak. If there is any crime against the giver of good things, it is the frying of a succulent, juicy steak.

As we chewed away on the tough meat the Doctor sarcastically remarked: "The onions are good; I always like a steak smothered in onions, don't you?"

"Yes, if the steak is eatable, but I believe with 'Frank Forester' that the penalty for frying a steak should be death, without benefit of clergy."

"I agree," replied the Doctor, "but on the menus in New York and Paris I find an expensive item named 'Chateaubriand,' and the waiters tell me that it is a beefsteak an inch and a half thick, cooked between two thin slices of beef, which are thrown away; all I know is that it is thick, juicy and tender, and is a veritable poem in beef; you can't dispute that!"

"When the financial wind blows from the right quarter, I agree, but at other times I forget that such things are and order fried clams or a 'Hamburg' steak. But why, in this place, and with such an apology for a steak before us, do you mention a 'Chateaubriand?' 'No more of that, Hal, an' thou lovest me.'"

"All right; in future we will order our meals while in country places and stick to ham, eggs and such things they have and know how to cook. We may be here all night for all I know, there's no telling

when the boat will arrive." The landlord had removed the steak and we had finished the ham and eggs, the rice pudding and the *cafe noir*, when the Doctor exclaimed: "Hark! that was a steamer's whistle. One is expected from down the river also. Say 'up' or 'down' for the cigars; not to be bought here, but when we reach a place where we can get a decent weed; we have plenty for present use."

"Down!" and I won. We had our luggage taken to the levee, where old Sam was dickering with a man about the big fish. He had taken it up to the scales, and it weighed 54 pounds. The man offered "a dollah an' fo' bits," but Sam held out for two dollars until the boat rounded to, and the steward and Sam went to look at the fish, and it was brought on board to be served for the roustabouts who formed part of the crew. No wood was taken here and we were soon off. At some landing a lot of gamblers got on; the Doctor said they had left the up-going boat, and that they worked the river nightly in that way. After supper the cabin was lighted and the games were opened. They were of the kind that follow circuses and fairs, at which the yokel has a better chance of being struck by lightning than of winning from the experts. There was the old "sweatboard," three-card monte, and a game that was new to me, called "chuck luck." It was a gorgeous lay-out of watches, jewelry, and one prize of \$100 in gold. Ten dice were thrown, and 60 would

win the gold, while 10 would win a fine gold chronometer. It was a dollar a throw. I watched the game for an hour; the highest throw was 42 and the lowest was 30, and the prizes were trashy pins, rings and silver mugs, yet the real players did not seem to mistrust that some of the dice were loaded. After the hour was up the play slackened, and then a new bettor came in and lost a few times, and then, after a wrangle, when I saw enough to know that the dice were shifted, he took another throw and won the gold. This brought in a few more bettors, who played awhile, and then another stranger appeared and won the chronometer with a throw of 10. But at a midnight landing I noticed that the men who won the big prizes went ashore with the gamblers.

As we turned in the Doctor said: "It's curious how those fellows always find enough fools who think that they can beat them. That pack of gamblers took off at least three hundred dollars from this boat, and they can do it with the same crowd when they come back. I never cease to wonder at it."

"Nor I. If I were a gambling amateur I would never risk money on a game handled by a professional. Those fellows can juggle dice, cards or other implements of their trade in a manner that only a trained eye can detect, and they are not in business to enrich a lot of steamboat passengers. Good night!"

It was near noon when we left the steamer at Red

River landing, on the Mississippi. Here we bought an old tub of a scow, a piece of canvas that had been in use on a steamer, pork, bacon, some bread, butter, a frying pan and an iron pot; hired a ducky to load the outfit on his wagon and deposit us on the banks of the Atchafalaya River, some dozen miles to the west. The road was bad, miry in places, and the mules were slow. It was after sundown when we reached the river, which at that time was only capable of floating our craft. We made a fire. Pete hobbled one mule, put a bell on it, turned both out, and got out his blankets. We fried bacon and made tea, determined to try to enjoy life despite the swarms of mosquitoes. Pete turned in on the wagon, but we spread our canvas on the ground, turned the boat over it and crawled in, but between the mosquitoes and that clanging cow-bell on the mule no one reveled in too much sleep.

Morning has never failed to come, up to the present writing, no matter how slow it may be in getting here, and this time there was no exception to the rule. The Doctor interspersed his remarks with whacks at our insect pests. Slap—"There's no use (slap) in staying here (slap) an extra minute (slap). You must make the coffee (slap) and fry out some (slap) pork fat (slap), and I'll get some (slap) fish and (slap) clean them, and we'll (slap) scoot." Slap.

I slapped and obeyed his directions in the intervals

of slapping. Pete assured us that a few miles below the river broadened, and we might get a breeze that would banish the pests, and we enjoyed the very anticipation of such a respite. As for Pete, he seldom slapped, and was not much annoyed. There is much in being used to your environment, and that's a mighty good word to represent a swampy hole, where insects make life miserable. The waters had covered the earth in this part when the Red River, in its season of flood, had taken a short cut across it in order to reach the Gulf in less time than by following its usual course down the tortuous Mississippi. Our ablest engineers have tried to prevent this overflow, but without avail; each year the water covers this district and makes agriculture impossible.

Breakfast over, we launched the scow, loaded her with our plunder, including a ten-gallon copper tank for alcoholic specimens of the smaller forms of aquatic life, and shoved off. Pete left for home after breakfast, and we were not sorry. We were now independent of him, and this was sufficient cause for rejoicing.

We had intended to drift down, merely steering with pole or oar, but anxiety to reach the place where the wind would scatter our hosts of enemies impelled the use of both pole and oar to reach the promised water. "Mark," said I, and paddling ceased; I picked up a gun and dropped two teal out of a bunch

of five. As I picked them up and dropped them in the boat, I added: "There's our dinner, Doctor."

Just then he called: "Mark!" dropped three out of a bunch of seven, and replied: "And there's our supper. We will shoot no more to-day, for when we reach the wide water and leave the 'skeeters' behind we will pick up enough frogs for a good breakfast."

A full hour after starting the river broadened, and by keeping well to the eastern bank we got a breeze from above the tree-tops, and were happy. Here we rested awhile, and then began collecting the fresh-water mussels, Unios, snails, crawfish, frogs and other forms of aquatic life. The frogs, and all but a few crawfish, were for our menu, the rest went into the alcohol.

The day was not bright, but the Doctor looked at the bright spot where the sun was supposed to be, and asked: "Do you begin to feel hungry?"

"No, I don't begin to feel that way; my appetite is at least two hours old and has become chronic."

"But," looking at his watch, "it's only 10:30, and if you were at the Colonel's you would not think of eating for two full hours from now."

"If we were at the mansion we would not have been turned out before daylight by insects to get breakfast and escape, and then paddle and push an old tub some five or six miles down stream. I don't need a watch to tell me when I want to eat on such an occasion. You make a fire on this point, get out

some fat to fry these frogs, and I'll skin the breasts of a pair of teal, cut them out and we will feast in a manner to forget that miserable steak of yesterday, and that equally miserable breakfast with slap accompaniment this morning."

"But you laid out the frogs for breakfast to-morrow; how's that?"

"Frogs, my dear Doctor, are not so rare in Louisiana swamps as to necessitate economy, as we are situated. I was not hungry when I allotted them for breakfast; I will probably lay out more for that event. It is well that our teal are all blue-wings, or we would need the whole five for dinner, and we may yet if you don't get that fire under way soon."

By the time he had a good fire started, and the frogs rolled in cracker dust and frying, I had several fillets of teal cooking on sticks and was basting them with pork fat.

"How do you like your teal, Doctor, rare or well done?"

"Moderately rare; it is better that they should be under than over done. The frogs are ready and well done. I'll get the tea made, the cutlery out and some bark for plates, and trust the teal to you."

We passed through another mosquitoes' paradise, but in half an hour left them behind. About 4 o'clock we came to a breezy point which impressed the Doctor as the place to camp, for we might not find its equal.

"Doctor;" said I, "do you see that cloud coming up in the west, no bigger than a man's farm?"

"Yes; that's a storm, sure."

"Then let us make camp at once, and let it come. Let us hope that the wind, which comes first, will drive the 'skeeters' so far into the woods that they can't get back after the rain kills the wind."

The canvas was spread, the boat dragged up over it and propped up on the leeward side with two stumps, the canvas so arranged that the edges would come inside the boat, and our provisions secured before the cloud cut off our daylight. Then came the moaning of the forest, as if each great tree was praying not to have its roots torn from the earth, yet the air was still and oppressiye. Not a sound came from beast or bird during this awful stillness. We were cuddled together under the boat, but did not talk. When all Nature is hushed man should be silent. Gradually there was a sound of moving tree-tops, which increased rapidly; we could feel the air move under our boat as it curled over the upturned bottom. Distant thunder rumbled, and after a time a dull flash followed it. The rumblings became louder and the intervals between them and the flashes were less; the wind was now shrieking among the tree-tops, and the sound of dropping branches was frequent. Then came a roar of wind and a few pattering drops of rain fell on our boat, and we knew that the drops were great ones. A tree crashed to the

ground near us, and some small animal ran under our canvas on my side, but I was too much interested in the conflict between earth and sky to mention it. There was a blinding flash that was instantly followed by an ear-splitting discharge of heaven's artillery, and a large branch fell on our boat.

Then the Doctor spoke: "That was a close call for us, but lightning will always take a tree before it will reach for a man, but will surely take him if he is under it. Did you ever hear it pour harder than it is hammering our boat now?"

"No, never; but the rain has killed the wind and the storm is passing to the east, at least the electrical part of it; I am only afraid that the mosquitoes will come to see how we weathered the storm after the rain ceases. I have been wondering if our canvas would wet through, but all such questions fade into insignificance before the mosquito."

"Something ran over me just after that first tree fell," the Doctor said, "and I heard it jump up on one of the seats of the boat, but never heard it go away. What could it be?"

"Don't know; something ran under the canvas on my side close to my back, and it may be there yet, for all I know; I haven't stirred for fear of pressing water into the canvas. The wind has gone and the rain is going. I am in good condition to eat, and if I had a good bellyful, I have an abiding faith that sleep would come; a sleep which had principal and

interest due for last night, and would defy so small a thing as a mosquito to disturb it. Nothing, my medical friend, is so conducive to sleep as a well-filled stomach. Some men in your profession advise exercise after dinner. See how the cow, dog and cat curl up and go to sleep after a gorge of grass, chicken bones or milk, and then give me a reason for exercise after eating or why I should not take a nap after dinner?"

"Not a reason; and there is no reason why we should lie here all night hungry; it is hardly dark and we can find some dry wood to start a fire; let's do it."

The sky was clear and the moon, just past the full, was rising, but was concealed from us on the east bank by the trees. We found some dry pine and soon had a roaring fire. The Doctor took the bag of provisions from the seat of the boat and turned the boat over so as to dry the canvas before the fire; something dropped from the overturned seat, and he picked up a squirrel, with the remark: "That's the animal that ran over me, and it's stone dead."

"What could have killed it after it had found shelter on the seat under the boat?"

"Heart failure, my boy; its heart stopped beating and it died."

"Clear as mud! When you medical Johnnies have no idea what a fellow dies of you look wise and say 'heart failure'; want of breath would do as well, but

the question before the jury is: Why did that squirrel's heart fail?"

The Doctor smiled and said: "Here's another squirrel under your side of the canvas, and that's a conundrum for you, but let's drop conundrums and get supper. If you'll skin out the breasts of the three teal I'll get more wood and fry some ham, for I could eat the teal alone at this time o' day, after that early dinner."

Two good slices of ham and the breasts of three teal, with bread, butter and tea, made a good meal for two tired and hungry men, and as we sat on the edge of the boat and saw that the steaming canvas did not scorch we smoked in silence and watched the moon through the tree-tops. I was wondering if those squirrels were killed by fright, and if so, whether other sportsmen had noticed anything of the kind. It was my unprofessional opinion that the hearts of the squirrels had failed from terror, but they were adults, and must have heard thunder before; yet that storm was an extraordinary one, and had struck a tree, if not two, close by. There was no use in pressing the question on the Doctor, who no doubt thought as I did, for there seemed to be no other solution of the problem; still it was curious that two squirrels should seek protection under our boat about the same time, and both should die. I have heard that rabbits have been either killed or paralyzed by a sudden shout from a man, but never

witnessed such a thing, and have thought it curious how a shout could have that effect when I have seen them escape, apparently unharmed, from a gun-shot.

The frogs were discussing matters, probably freshets and droughts, or the edibility of beetles, dragon flies and other insects; the night herons were "quawking" to keep in range of each other, and an owl in a tree overhead was arguing with an owl across the stream on the cause of the scarcity of mice, and regretting that it was necessary to fill up on cold-blooded frogs. While meditating on these things, a muskrat made a great commotion in the water and roused us both.

The Doctor arose, yawned, looked at the moon, slapped a mosquito, and said: "It's near midnight, and we've been dozing. Let's turn in. There's nothing fresh in camp for breakfast except the squirrels, and here we are miles from a butcher or grocer."

"Well, Doctor, we are in a land of plenty as long as our fishing tackle and ammunition hold out, and if those fail we can get enough frogs with saplings to last if we keep our matches dry, for I'm a sinner if I want to eat raw frog. Let's spread the canvas, turn the boat over it and let the mosquitoes do the rest."

The sun was up before we were, and our insect friends had worked faithfully, but we, fortified with a good supper, good consciences and with sleep due us, never heeded them. In those days we accepted

mosquitoes as we did thunderstorms, as things that there was no dodging and as necessary evils to be borne without grumbling. We knew of no combinations of tar and oil, "lolicapop," and other preparations to anoint the skin and repel insect advances. The Doctor had spoken of mint and peppermint in this connection, but we found none. He had ammonia, which we used in a diluted form to alleviate the stings. At the close of the century I glance back and see the changes. We prided ourselves that percussion caps had superseded flints, that good guns were lower in price than in 1800; but we never dreamed of such outfits as the sportsman of to-day goes afield with. He is luxuriously provided for, but I doubt if the younger men appreciate it; they have a choice of many insect repellents, and do not suffer as we did only a quarter of a century ago, and that is only yesterday.

Said the Doctor: "You do the fishing this morning and I will prepare the squirrels, and be ready to help to do the same with the fish."

He spoke as if the catching of fish enough for breakfast was a certain thing, and it was. The waters were so filled with fish and the competition for food was so great that a baited hook hardly got below the surface before a fish of some kind took it. Casting out some undesirable species, I took six crappies and three big warmouths in half an hour, and said to my friend: "There's a breakfast for

you, about six pounds of fish, gross weight, and at least four net. Then, if you can eat a fried squirrel, with the usual amount of bread and butter, after the fish are gone, I'll go and get some frogs, for if we starve here it will be our fault."

After the fish and squirrels had been disposed of the Doctor said: "Now bring on your frogs."

I started for the boat, but he declared that he was joking, and that we had better pack up and drift down the river. As we drifted a few miles the river widened and we had a southerly breeze from the Gulf night and day. "The absence of pain is pleasure," and we fully realized this as we entered the country where the Gulf wind is strong enough to keep the mosquitoes back. Here I could hope to find new forms of life, and I began work again. It was fun for the Doctor, who had never paid any attention to the smaller aquatic life, and he was enthusiastic in collecting. We did not repeat the error of the first day in being caught with a short commissary. There were always ducks, frogs and squirrels enough in our larder to tide over a rainy day, or even two, but we only caught fish as we needed them. We had two rainy days, not thunder showers, but two consecutive days of drizzle, and still had meat on hand when it cleared up, for we had two soft-shelled turtles, ten squirrels, fourteen ducks and a lot of frogs when the rain began. We camped on a point and just cooked, ate, smoked and slept. We

took a few fish for a change of diet, and could have killed a hundred or more ducks, but did not need them.

We had passed some houses on the higher lands, but having no occasion to stop, we did not visit them. Drifting along we naturally wondered where our boat might be in relation to a map of North America, or more particularly in Louisiana. "Doctor," said I, "this trip does not promise to yield more specimens, and we had better strike for a railway or for a chance to get to the Mississippi and go home."

CHAPTER X.

A SHORT CUT HOME.

"THIS is a pleasant life; why do you wish to leave it? Let us drift down to the bayou and then get back into civilization; how does that proposition suit you?"

"Can't do it. I've about finished my work on this river and must get back with my specimens. The life is pleasant, as you say, and I'd like a month of it, but I have duties to perform; you have none. There is a darky on a flatboat ferrying a team of mules and a wagon across; we can find out where we are."

He was a middle-aged man who "libed up yandah in St. Martin's Parish, 'bout fo' miles, an' jess cum fum Plaquemine, an' is gwine back in de mawnin' fo' mo' p'visions."

"How far is Plaquemine; and can we get a boat there for New Orleans?"

"I 'spects it's full twenty miles obah dah, an' de boats stops w'en dah's passengahs."

We arranged to camp there and go with him in the morning, and he gladly accepted our boat in payment for transportation. We would shoot a half-dozen teal to take to New Orleans, not that the mar-

kets would not supply all we needed, but a sportsman enjoys eating his own birds more than he does those he buys. He knows each individual by the shot-marks, and an incident in the day's sport is recalled by each bird. "Gawge," for so he called himself, promised to send over one of his boys to show us a marsh where the ducks came to feed before sundown, and we camped, got dinner and waited for the sun to get into the west, and for young "Gawge" to appear and show us the marsh.

A lot of crawfish had been gathered, and now was the time to utilize them. In the lobster country this small brother is not regarded as food, but it is very good, and in Germany it is bred for the table. To-day quite a number are sold in New York and New Orleans. But, as I am using a local name, it may be well to say that the English took the French name, "ecrивesse," and turned it into "crayfish," and "crawfish" is a further corruption, but more popular. In some salt waters there is a spiny lobster without the large claws which is also called "crayfish." Our crayfish are almost miniature lobsters, living in fresh waters, some specimens burrowing through the levees and causing damage to the amount of millions of dollars, some living in streams, under stones, and some living on the prairies of Kansas, and burrowing down to water. Where Germans and Norwegians have settled they are called "crabs," after their German name "krebs." So much for the name, as

necessary information to thousands who know the animal well, but never heard it called a crawfish. We have in America a verb from this noun, as "he *crawfished*," meaning that he backed out.

We had kept none under five inches, extreme length of body exclusive of claws, and had none over seven inches, but we had about sixty. The water in the iron pot was boiling, and in they went, all alive and kicking. Dr. Gordon remarked: "They never make a kick after they strike the water, neither does a lobster, if the water is boiling. I believe it paralyzes the nerves; don't you think so?"

"Perhaps it does; they never stir after they strike boiling water, but perhaps they're used to it, as the eels are to being skinned. We eat fish which die from asphyxiation, although they would be better if killed at once, but a lobster that dies in the air is really poisonous, and that is why I always buy live lobsters and have them cooked."

"Now you've opened up a new subject which interests me. I have had to treat a case of lobster poisoning, and while you are frying the fish and boiling the crawfish I'll make the tea, set the table and listen."

The fish sputtered in the pan, and a big drop of boiling fat found rest between the thumb and forefinger of my left hand, and just then a change of wind filled my eyes with smoke. Here my notes are blurred and all remarks are lost. I only remember

that Dr. Gordon stood looking at me for a moment and then remarked: "Language has its uses, but I do not remember to have heard it used as fuel before; you seem to be impatient with the process of cooking; fix your mind on Job and consider how patient he was for a long time, and here you let a trifling bit of smoke upset your temper."

Smarting in eyes and hand, the humor of the situation came to the fore at his reference to Job, and I said: "Job was all right in his day and time, and he was sorely tried, but he never camped out on the Atchafalaya River, and after days of mosquito stinging tried to cook his dinner with his eyes full of burning smoke and his hand burned with boiling fat at the same time that an old sawbones wants to know a lot about lobster poisoning. Go back to Job if you want to learn about boils, and perhaps you may learn how to boil lobsters."

When all was ready we sat down to our dinner. The table, be it of mahogany, a stump, or a bit of canvas on the ground, is a treaty of amnesty; all hostilities are suspended and are temporarily forgotten. The man who brings up a disagreeable subject at table is an enemy to all mankind. This is the rule the world over. "Pistols and coffee for two." We may fight, but not at the table; there we bury the hatchet, if only for an hour.

We started in on the fried crappies at a safe distance from the smoke, which, Dr. Gordon remarked,

"always follows beauty, and if the adage is true, I wonder how it ever got into your eyes."

"That's dead easy, Doctor; it had no other way of avoiding you. Have another crappie; these are even better than the ones from Red River and Catahoula Lake. I wonder if they go down into brackish water; if they do, I don't know it."

When the crawfish were served there was a pause while I arranged the fillets of duck before the glowing coals, and the Doctor was awaiting my return. Said he: "I am in doubt just how these things should be eaten, whether shells and all, or how?"

I was pouring the tea, and answered: "Open them and use them as if they were lobsters, that's all."

"I know nothing of the anatomy of a lobster, but have heard that there are poisonous parts. A while ago I ventured to speak of this, but between smoke and scalding fat you lost your temper so far as to speak disrespectfully of Job, and no doubt the equator might have come under your disapprobation at that time if any person had been rash enough to mention it."

Picking up a crawfish for illustration, I announced: "This is the first lecture on crustacean anatomy, the subject being the lobster and the related species. It will be short, for two reasons: First, the lecturer doesn't get a cent for his services; and second, his dinner is waiting. It is to be hoped

that the audience will be attentive and will restrain their enthusiasm, for the rule of only one encore will be strictly enforced. Now, Doctor, you will observe that first I break off the head from the thorax, which in the lobster cannot be done, and throw it away. In the lobster we merely take out the stomach, which is just back of the eyes, and is one of the 'poisonous parts,' but as no one could eat it, there is no chance of poisoning from it. It is something like a gizzard and has teeth, which when opened show the 'lady in the chair.' From the stomach there is no opening except the mouth, and as the owl ejects the fur and bones of mice, so does the lobster eject material that is not digestible. Then all food that is assimilated is strained through that stomach, and forms green and white fats in the carapace, which are delicious in fresh lobster, but are lost when the meat is canned. Then, at the beginning of the abdomen, where the joints of what is called the 'tail' start, there is a green-colored drain-tube, which runs to the vent, and this is the other so-called 'poisonous part,' but why any person should eat this intestine I don't know."

During this talk young "Gawge" came in camp. He was a "likely" boy of perhaps fourteen years old, and seemed diffident. He took off his hat and waited to be noticed. I had seen him standing behind the Doctor while giving the lecture on the lobster and its cousin the crawfish, and at a convenient

time I noticed him and asked: "Is yo' young Gawge?"

"Yas, sah, I is, an' dey sayed yo' wanted fo' to go to de duck marsh, but didden' know whah he was."

"Yo's right, honey," said I, "an' yo' jess squatulate down heah an' fill yo' insides w'ile we gits ready."

"Pardon me," the Doctor interposed, "your disquisition on the lobster may be all right, but your attempt at darky dialect is a failure; the boy has no idea what you mean by 'squatulate;' that's some of your Northern coinage; let me try him. Ho, Gawge! Come heah an' stick yo' toof in owah poak an' chicken fixens."

He grinned, sat down and watched us eat crawfish; but when the Doctor offered him a dozen on a piece of bark he looked disgusted and said: "No, sah, I don' eat nun o' dem crawlahs; dey's p'ison."

He could not be induced to touch one; the argument that we had eaten them many times had no effect. Prejudice is a powerful thing, and is not to be put down by reasoning. The London boy in the country who wanted to go home and get good milk from the milkman because, "here they pull the milk out of a nahsty cow, I saw 'em do it," is a sample. An Arab, brought up on milk from mares, camels and asses, wonders why some people spleen against the milk of those animals, and we often run against a prejudice against frogs and eels, and all this is

simply because they are unaccustomed foods to some people, who will not try to like them. George would not eat frogs, and here was a poor darky family living on hog and hominy, with an occasional fish or duck, declining to eat two things that are considered delicacies, the crawfish and the frog. The fried crappies were just to the boy's taste, and with the hardtack he made a meal before the ducks were served. But his appetite was of the full size ball-bearing, easy-running, self-lubricating, reversible action, non-assessable kind that, once started, was like Tennyson's "Brook," and as we had a desire to be hospitable, the Doctor put in six more crappies that had been reserved for supper, for we intended to keep the teal for ourselves, as eating crawfish is as unsatisfactory as eating peanuts—one never gets enough, and can't stop until none are left.

The southern breeze that came up the river day and night made our camp delightful, because it kept off the mosquitoes, which, having no keel nor centerboard, can only go with the wind. After dinner we lay down and slept. What George did, or what he thought about an after-dinner nap, we did not know; but when I became conscious it was 4 P. M., and the boy was seated on a log with his bare feet dangling in the water. The Doctor soon aroused, and we arranged to go to the "ma'sh" where the ducks came at sundown; and here a new question arose.

"Doctor, this old tub of a boat is all right to float down stream in, but suppose this marsh is some miles down the river, how will we get back? In my younger life I thought myself a fair oarsman, but would have hesitated to take an old water-soaked packing box like ours a great way up stream."

The Doctor reflected a minute before he said: "The river is wide here; there is but little current, and the wind will be with us coming back. How far is the 'ma'sh', George?"

"Jess yandah, sah, awn de oder side in de grass you see aroun' de bend."

"Not a mile," the Doctor remarked; "we're good for that, I think. What do you say?"

"Of course we're good for that; I can swim that distance, and tow the old tub if you'll pole a little. Let's get the guns and ammunition aboard, and get over and build our blind. The only drawback is that we have no light boat to chase cripples and pick up the birds."

The boy then remarked: "I'll swim out fo' de ducks."

We had already limited our killing to six blue-winged teal to be taken to New Orleans, as has been related. The marsh was in a bend of the river, and covered several miles. We had no decoys, but we had some poles, over which we laid grass, and waited. Along about sundown the sharp-eyed boy jumped up and yelled: "Dah he come!" and a flock

of pintails swerved to the east and passed us out of shot.

"George," said I, "many are the men and boys that I have killed for scaring game away, but I don't want to kill you, 'cause you's a good boy. But I'm a Yankee, an' a Yankee jess likes to kill a darky boy an' cook him fo' his dinnah. Didden' yo' fader tole yo' I was a Yankee? If he didden', den heah's Dr. Gawden'll tell yo', an' if yo' yells out w'en de ducks is a-comin' in, Gawge, I'll hab to 'cide ef I has ducks fo' dinnah o' a roas' darky boy. I doan lak fo' to kill yo', but yo' mus' keep still an' not 'larm de ducks."

"Very good! Better dialect," said my friend. "Now, George, you must keep down and keep still. When you see ducks coming say 'Mark!' in a low voice or our Yankee friend may do as he says, fo' he's a sho 'nuff Yankee, an' he might think that he would rather eat yo' than a duck. Yo's heard 'bout Yankees?"

With his eyes fixed in a stare on my face and almost a pallor on his face, the horrified boy managed to say: "I'se heered 'bout 'em, but he doan look lak a Yankee. I'll keep still, but yo' ain' no Yankee, is yo'?"

"Yes, I am a Yankee, but I don' eat colored boys now, 'less I hab to kill 'em fo' scarin' ducks away. If yo' keep quiet and do as Dr. Gordon says, yo' will go home to yo' mammy safe."

The ducks came in and we could have slain hundreds. Our forbearance puzzled the boy then, and perhaps he does not understand it to this day. Our limit was six blue-winged teal, for green-wings were scarce. But a flock of green-wings came over and we gathered in four of them.

Said the Doctor: "We did not count on these small ducks, hardly as large as a pigeon, but let us rate them at two for one blue-wing in weight of meat. How do you rank them in the epicurean sense?"

"Higher than the blue-wing, and that's very high. But tastes differ as well as ducks, and I know men who prefer green-wing teal to any duck." A flock of ducks was coming up, and we were watching them, when they whirled away over the stream and might have turned and come our way, behind the island, but the excitement was too great for George, who jumped and called out: "Yandah he go!" Then he caught my fixed gaze and collapsed. Every time he raised his eyes he met the same gaze. He picked at his fingers and was wishing himself safely on shore, but in all his after movements he kept the Doctor between him and that gaze.

A single duck came over and the Doctor winged it, and now George saw his chance, and in he plunged to catch it in water almost knee deep. The duck would dive, and the boy could see it in the shallow water and would rush to head it off, for with

one wing broken it circled about, and once I might have shot it, but the boy was in the way. He splashed and tumbled after the bird for a while, but lost it in the marsh and returned with his two garments dripping. He spoke to the Doctor: "Some-time I mos' fotch him, an' den he gwine undah, an' I run hard fo' him an' 'spec' to fotch him w'en he come up, but I fall down an' he crawl in de grass, an' w'en I get dah he gawn." He would occasionally glance my way, but I had punished him enough, and no longer stared at him in a cannibalistic manner.

We had our allotment of six blue-wings, or their equivalent, when I said: "Doctor, we have reached the limit where we agreed to stop shooting."

"All right, we'll go to camp."

"Doctah, mommy say w'en yo's got mo' ducks 'an yo' want, yo' might send some fo' de fambly."

"How many in yo' fambly, Gawge?" the Doctor asked.

"Dah's me an' Ben an' Pete an' Bill an' Jo an' Mose an' Kate an' Lucy an' Sue an' Lindy; I 'spec's dat's all."

"That's ten children, and the old folks make an even dozen. The ducks are coming in thicker now. What d' ye say, shall we load the boy up?"

"Yes, it's a fair excuse for more shooting; there will be no waste. Mark behind!" A big flock of pintails came fairly over us, and the four barrels brought down seventeen ducks, of which only one

got away, although we had to shoot two of them again. "Only eight more," said the Doctor, "to make just two apiece 'fo' de fambly.'" That was a good start. The next flock yielded six. "Two more," said the Doctor, and a bunch of blue-wings came past and left us seven. "And that's good measure," was the Doctor's remark.

As George lived on that side of the river and knew a short cut to the road, he gathered his ducks and proposed to carry them home. "Let's see," the Doctor soliloquized, "twenty-two sprigtails, twice twenty-two are forty-four; and a half make 11 pounds more, that's fifty-five, and the teal." Then aloud: "Why, boy, there are over 60 pounds of ducks, and you've got four miles to go. You can't do it. Make two loads of them and you'll have all you want to carry then."

We strung half the ducks on a string through the under bill, and tying the ends of the string, put it over his left shoulder and under his right arm, as a soldier carries his blanket in the field, the ducks equally divided in front and rear. He wanted to leave the rest of the birds on a hummock until he returned. As he could not return under three hours, and the sun had gone down, I overruled his proposition by saying to the Doctor: "We have killed these ducks to be used as food, and we must see that they are so used. I will not agree to leave them in this marsh, for I know what occurs after dark here as

well as I know what is sure to happen to an unprotected duck on the Bowery after the shades of night have fallen. One mink has a good nose, twenty minks have twenty good noses, and as soon as it is dark there be scores of mink hunting crippled ducks and other prey in this marsh, and coming on a pile of ducks there would not be one left beside the stake which we planted to mark the spot where the game was left. These ducks must go to our camp, where the boy can surely find them, even if he travels further."

"But," said the Doctor, "I have understood that the mink only sucks the blood of living creatures, and if so, why should he carry off ducks that are dead and which yield no blood?"

The boy had gone, for I had spoken authoritatively, and as we poled toward camp I found occasion to say: "You have a wrong understanding of the habits of the mink, but your view of the habits of this animal is the popular one. I can't work hard and talk at the same time. You pole over to the east side of the river, where you remarked that there was no current when we came down, and I will steer and unfold unto you the true character of the mink."

When we got into the slack water I resumed: "A mink loves warm blood, and if one gets into a henery, a duckery or among other birds where it can load up on warm blood there is hardly a limit to the number of fowl that it will kill. Such an orgie sel-

dom happens more than once in the life of an individual mink. If it comes to one it is the event of his lifetime. He enjoys it as Jack does a night in the Tenderloin after being penned up on a cruiser for six months. Fresh, warm blood in quantities *ad lib.* are in the nature of a grand carouse to a mink, but not any part of his everyday life. His food is meat, but he will discard meat for warm blood if it is on tap, just as we will discard our hardtack for soft bread when we get to New Orleans. I speak by the card, because in my younger life, as a trapper, I often took the mink with baits of chicken, fish and porridge, and they have killed my pet wood ducks by the dozen when they found an opening in the pens."

It was very dark when we reached camp, and it might have puzzled us to find it if the few coals from our fire had not indicated it. The moon was past the full and would not be up for some hours, and but few stars were visible.

"Doctor, we are hungry, and if you remember there is nothing to eat in camp but bread and butter. The fish that we had cleaned and laid by for supper you fried for that ever-hungry darky boy; there must have been a dozen at least. What will we do?"

"Eat bread and butter, I suppose, for the ducks are too freshly killed to eat. There are frogs enough bellowing around us, but it's too dark to get them. What do you say?"

"I say that bread, butter and tea are not enough, and, as you say, the ducks are too warm to eat. Just skin out the breast of one of the boy's pintails for bait, and I'll get a catfish supper out of this river in short order; they are night feeders, and while I fish you gather some wood and have everything else in order."

With a strong hand-line and a dozen fair-sized hooks I ran out a set-line baited with duck, for there was no time to fish in the regular way. The line was staked out at each end, and ran out a hundred feet. Then I went ashore and was seated by the fire when the Doctor came in with a load of dry wood.

"I thought you were fishing!"

"I am."

If the Doctor was curious to know how I was fishing he said no more, but peeled bark for plates, and went on with his work. Bark plates, burned after each meal, are away ahead of the tin abominations which need washing. After a while my watch said that the line had been fishing twenty minutes, and I jumped into the boat and took it in. Of the twelve hooks four were skinned and the others had one big, soft-shelled turtle, two medium-sized eels and five catfish weighing from one to six pounds. Here was supper and breakfast too and I took the overcoats from those eels and from three of the smaller catfish in short order, for in boyhood days I always prepared my catch for mother's table, and I was expert

in relieving a bullhead or an eel of his jacket, and the Doctor had them in the frying pan before they had time to make his acquaintance. An appetite is a thing that improves with age, up to a certain point, where it vanishes. The odor from Doctor Gordon's pan stimulated a rather fagged appetite and increased its energy.

"Don't you think they are done, Doctor?"

"Just about done. You pour the tea and I'll just fry a couple of these hardtack that I have soaked in water. Here's an eel to begin on."

Verily, Louisiana is a land of plenty. If a man could get along without bread he could live for years as we lived. The woods and the waters would furnish food and if he lacked ammunition he could get fish and game by more primitive methods, if he knew how to spear and trap. The De Long party of wrecked Arctic explorers perished in sight of game in Siberia because there was not a woodsman in the party.

To them the footprints of the nocturnal Arctic hare meant nothing; the deer did not stand to be shot, and they starved amid plenty. Perhaps the same party might have starved in the Louisiana lowlands, surrounded by a wealth of life, but we never came near the vanishing point of hunger, nothing more than what they call being "sharp set," across the water.

We had smoked and were lying on the canvas

after a full feed in comfort, and it must have been a full hour before my friend remarked: "It's about time the moon came up; it's nearly 11 now by my watch."

Voices across the river were coming nearer, and as we heard men getting into the flatboat we knew that some one was coming for the ducks. We listened and heard: "Yo', Mose, yo' ain' pushin' hahd; I kain stee'; an' ef yo' doan push, an' we'll go down de ribbah."

"I'se a-pushin' awn mah pole, but Ben and Pete is bofe awn de uddah side, an' I'se done ovah. I sees 'de fiah fum de camp, an' I'se wuckin' to get dah, but dem boys boun' to push me down ribbah."

"Yo', dah, Ben an' Pete! Doan push so hahd ag'in Mose, o' we doan go 'cross."

When they landed, young George was not with the party. His father explained that the boy was afraid to come back for the ducks, "'Cause," he said, "dey was a man who said he was a Yankee and dat he sometime eat a cullud boy, an' he look at him 's if he like to chaw awn him. But I tell him dat Yankees is lak oddah people; but he doan want fo' to come."

We gave them the ducks, the turtle and the two big catfish, and as they left I called the Doctor's attention to the fact that there was nothing in camp for breakfast, and that we must be ready to start for Plaquemine some time to-morrow and that it might

be after dark when we got there, and, being human, we must eat on the way.

"My dear boy," said the Doctor, "the richness of the fried eels and catfish may disarrange your internal economy, and I advise that you take a small dose of this frumenti. As for a supply of food, I have so far relied on you for it, and there seems to be no reason why I should not rely on the same source for what we need on the morrow."

"Thanks, Doctor; but if you will get up early and catch fish enough for breakfast I will feel that you have no reason to rely entirely upon me for our sustenance. Good night."

CHAPTER XI.

"HURRY UP DEM MULES."

Two sharp reports of a gun rebounded from the forest opposite, and seemed half a dozen as the echoes died away. I crawled out from under the boat and found Doctor Gordon running toward it. "Launch it quick, I've got some ducks!" he called, and we shoved out into the fog on the river. The ducks had fallen up stream, and the current was weak on our side, so that we were in time to harvest them as they floated past, but our range of vision was limited to about twenty feet in all directions. We picked up six green-winged teal and heard a couple of cripples flop out into the dense mist to hide in the sedge all day and be eaten by the keen-nosed mink at night. It is a mistaken idea that a crippled duck pines away and dies from blood poisoning or starvation. One of two things happens to a wounded wildfowl. If only just wing-tipped so that it can't fly, it may skulk by day and have a chance for life by feeding at night and sleeping on open water, for all wildfowl are on the constant watch for danger. But if badly crippled in body or brain, the gulls watch for it by day and the mink searches the shores and marshes for it by night. The duck then fills the

mission for which Nature intended it—food for man or other animals—and in Nature's scheme the beasts and birds of prey are to be provided for. The moral of this is to show that if a sportsman wounds a duck it has a chance to live, mate with some other "pensioner" and so round out its life for another season, but if badly hurt there is no prolonged suffering.

"Now," said Dr. Gordon, "these six green-wings are more than equivalent to three blue-wings, and we may use three blues for breakfast and take the fresher birds to New Orleans, for the blues were killed long enough to be eatable now; you prefer the greens, and I want to take them to New Orleans and have them served there under your orders."

"You said that you were going to get fish for breakfast, Doctor, and while my last waking thoughts were on fish, they found no place in dream. I think I slept solidly all night, for this Gulf breeze, with its freedom from mosquitoes, is a relief which I fail to find words to express. An aching molar deftly removed is an instant relief, but our immunity from the insect has been gradual. I can only compare it this way: Our first night on the Atchafalaya, near Red River Landing, may be likened to 'Fiddler's Green,' which the Irish locate as being nine miles below Gehenna. Then we reached a spot which was an ordinary Hades, as figured in Dante's 'Inferno'; a place of punishment for those who had committed only the minor sins. Another day

brought us where the terror of the night is only an annoyance, and here we are in the Elysian Fields!"

The fog was lifting before the rising sun, and we had a journey of some thirty miles before us to Plaquemine, with no idea when a steamer would pick us up. The Doctor took off a lot of catfish from the set-line, and I knocked down a lot of pintails before the fog lifted, and we exchanged them for the darky's teal. If a darky thinks sprigtails as good as teal, why not? but the fact is that bacon is the grandest thing that his palate knows, and all other foods are classed below that great staple.

The sun was hardly an hour high when we finished our breakfast, and the Doctor remarked: "It will be two or three hours before our smoked American will be here with his team, and we might as well put in our time in accumulating a wealth of frogs for use on our journey. How does that strike you?"

"Just the thing. No man can say when we will reach the 'Father of Waters,' and if we have a well-filled commissary we don't care. Get your fish-line rigged and I'll cut a pole."

We had by after count sixty-seven giant batrachians, taken in three hours, before we heard our wagon coming to the landing. It was the middle of November and the sun rose about 6.30. We began frogging an hour later, and here was our friend, who promised an early start, about to reach us at 11 A. M.

If "time was made for slaves" it must have been abolished in George's household when emancipation was proclaimed. While we were in no pressing hurry, we had an inclination to start when ready, and now we began to think of dinner.

After the creaking lumber wagon had moved off the flatboat George remarked: "We's done a heap o' wuk dis mawnin', an' me an' Mose is gettin' hungry, an' as dis is de las' place whah dey's no skeetahs, I 'spec's we bes' get ouah dinnah; ha, ha! W'at yo' say, Doctah?"

"Yes, get dinner first." Then to me: "That 'skeeter' argument was a good one; when we leave this Gulf breeze we hit the enemy again, and they hit us."

"Doctor," I asked, "is there no way of hurrying these people; have we got to spend the night in a dense forest where uncounted millions of poisonous insects are waiting to feed on us?"

"You might as well try to hurry the sun as try to instil 'push' into one of these Southern plantation darkies. They suffer with pains and aches, largely due to careless living, but they live long. See all the old ones in almost every house. I sometimes think that Dryden had one of these uncles in a prophetic mind when he wrote:

'Fate seemed to wind him up for four-score years;
Yet freshly ran he on ten winters more;
Till like a clock, worn out with eating time,
The wheels of weary life at last stood still.'

Many of these old darkies approach the mummy line before they die and just live on in a sort of vegetable life until there is no sap left, and they simply wither."

While dinner was preparing I was busy with my self-imposed task of discovering Dr. Gordon's——. Here our language lacks a word that "nativity" does not fill. Old Sam, at Alexandria, had revealed the fact that the Doctor was born in Georgia; the Doctor's idioms were from all over America and England. He had just spoken of a Louisiana negro as a "smoked American," a term that was common to the Western troops in Sherman's army, but one that I never heard from any Eastern regiments. Where was he educated?

We used our fish and some of our frogs for dinner, and George and his boy Mose, who had lain on his back on some hay in the wagon until the landing was made, looked on the frogs with such disgust as they could not conceal. They watched to see if we really did eat frogs, and after dinner looked over the bones in order to be certain that they were "sho' 'nuff" frogs, but our offers of this delicacy were politely declined with the assurance: "We's got plenty 'nuff, thankee, an' we's got to eat all dis bacon an' fried bread an' not was'e it."

It was high 12 before the mules were hitched and moved their hoofs and the wagon toward the Mississippi. We left the old tub of a boat as payment

for our transportation, and we walked. I insisted on taking the canvas, and that was all. George might have it when we left him at Plaquemine, but in case of rain it would be of service. The mules were in fair condition, but we now saw that there was no chance of getting through before sundown, and that we must pass a night in the woods within whose still recesses lurked millions of mosquitoes ready to take our last drop of blood and leave poison in its place. Somehow we conveyed this thought to each other without speaking, as we glanced at the midday sun at starting.

The old wagon had seen long service. The tires had been tightened up with wooden wedges, which the swamp water swelled so that the wheels were kept from dissolution. The axles groaned and cried piteously for grease until after a consultation the Doctor and I called a halt, stuck a limb under the end of an axle, lifted the wheel, propped up the limb, and took the wheel off and slipped it on again over a bit of pork rind, and after treating each wheel to the same sort of plaster, we went our way without further protest from the wheels. When I expressed surprise that George had not greased the axles before starting, the Doctor replied:

"These plantation negroes like to hear a wagon squeal, possibly they think it keeps off savage beasts, or perhaps evil spirits; but I have no idea that George knows that grease on an axle serves any

other purpose than silencing the noise. I'll ask him. George! why didn't you grease your wagon this morning before starting, and not have it go groaning and complaining of your neglect through the forest?"

"Hit come dis-a-way, Doctah; I tole my boy Mose, a-layin' in de wagon now, to 'range de wagon fo' a long trip to Plaquemine, an' he dun fo'got 'bout de grease fo' de w'eels. He's de laziest boy, dat Mose, wot I got, an' I'se a min' to make him walk, same as we's doin', 'stead o' ridin' awn de straw. Hey! You Mose, wake up an' 'splain wheffo' yo' no grease dat wagon dis mawnin' 'cordin' as I tole yo'!"

This was accompanied by a very light stroke of the black-snake whip as a sign of authority, but which would not have hurt a fly, and Mose emerged from the straw and said:

"Yo' done tole me to 'range de wagon fo' dis trip, but I knowed yo' like to heah him squeal fo' to wawn off de bahs an' de ghosts, so I 'glect fo' to grease de w'eels. Ef yo' done tole me fo' to put grease awn de w'eels, I done put it awn; dat's so, Doctah, fo' a fac'."

We had gone a mile or two after lubricating the wheels; the Doctor and I were walking behind the wagon when there was no water in the road, and piling in when we came to a wet spot. We were discussing some question of science or of natural his-

tory, when suddenly the wagon stopped and the mules went on, while George lurched out ahead. The animals kicked at the whiffletrees dangling against their heels, and then turned aside to browse. The old wagon-tongue had broken when the wheels dropped into a rut and the mules gave it a side strain.

"I 'clar' to goodness ef dat ah tongue ain' clean busted," George remarked as he pulled himself out of the mud. "Ho! Mose, yo' pull yo'se'f out dat straw an' min' dem mules w'ile I see how we gwine get awn."

The Doctor and I looked at each other. His face expressed abject misery, and mine must have impressed him in the same way, for we both burst out laughing. The prospect of spending several nights in the mosquito-laden woods, after our anxiety to get through them in one day, was regarded as a joke on us. The insects had found us; we could fight them by day, but what of the night?

The two darkies, father and son, stood gazing at the wreck. The father dreamily said: "Ef I had some slabs an' nails and some strong cawd, we's done fix dattah tongue so he go awn good."

"Very true," the Doctor replied, "but you have no slabs, nails nor cord, and there's no use to wish for them. We must make a new tongue."

"I kin fin' a small 'cawn tree fo' to make a tongue, but we ain't got no kin' o' tool fo' to make de holes fo' de bolts."

"Doctor," I asked, "what does he mean by a corn tree?"

"It's a species of hickory that bears the pecan nut of commerce, but the Southern pronunciation is 'pecawn,' which our teamster and other darkies shorten into 'cawn.'"

"I see. George, you go get your 'cawn tree and make a tongue and I'll bore the holes in it."

"W'at is yo' gwine make 'em wid?"

"My fingers! You go get the tree and trim it in shape. Never mind how I make the holes, and don't be all day about it; here it is 3 o'clock, and only two more hours of daylight, and we have not made ten miles. Hurry up or we will leave you and walk to the landing, for we might as well walk all night as to sleep among the 'skeeters' for two or three nights. Strike out now, get your small tree, square it where it goes between the braces, or whatever their names may be, on the axle, and get back soon."

The Doctor smiled as the man walked off with his axe and remarked: "If you were talking to some Northern woodsman or farmer, your words might have a stimulating effect, but as for hurrying George, you might as well try to hurry a calm. It will be dark before he comes in with the tree; yet I don't know but your threat of walking may bear fruit."

"Let us hope that it will. In the darkness of this forest, with its miry places in the road, we could not

make a mile an hour, but we can't move until morning. The squirrels are chattering and the frogs are croaking in a swamp off to the right. You go for squirrels and I'll see if I can't get some frogs and so help out our commissary."

As I cut a long sapling to hypnotize the frogs with and started off, I heard the Doctor singing:

"As I was a-comin' to Lynchburg town
My ole ox-cart it done broke down;
My oxen run, an' never did stop
Till dey got 'fore de do' ob de blacksmith shop.
Oh, Johnny Booker, help dis niggah;
Oh, Johnny Booker, do, oh, do.

"Says I, 'Mis'r Smith, do you charge anything
Fo' to men' my oaken ring?'
'Oh, no,' says he, 'we nebber charge
Unless de job am berry large;
A job like dat it am so small,
We nebber charge anything at all.'
Oh, Johnny Booker, help dis niggah;
Oh, Johnny Booker, do."

This old-time song evidently was suggested to the Doctor by the breaking of the wagon-tongue, but that he knew it brought up the old question of his early and late environment, for it was one of the old and early minstrel songs, and therefore did not originate in the South.

The frogs were difficult to get, because the swampy bottom of the marsh was hospitable, and

only on the extreme edges could I persuade a frog to be mine by stroking its back with the sapling or by dangling a fish-hook before its nose. The diminishing light of the sun hinted that an immediate return to camp would be preferable to spending the night in the swamp, and I took the hint.

At the show-down George displayed a crude wagon-tongue of pecan, all complete except the holes for bolts. The Doctor brought out fourteen squirrels, and I laid out thirty big frogs; not bad work for two hours in a swampy land, where locomotion was sorely impeded.

Supper over, our darkies proposed to turn in, but I objected. The wagon-tongue must be completed for a start in the morning. The Doctor and I agreed that an early start was desirable, and he turned over the command of the camp to me. I had felt the necessity of this move, but was diffident about suggesting it. The way was clear now. There was no more consultation with our darkies. Mose was ordered to look after the mules and George burned the old wagon-tongue, or "pole," in order to get out the bolts. Then I took the smallest bolt and at a red heat made a hole where needed, for a burned hole is always larger than the iron that burns it, and so we had a serviceable tongue fitted before we lay down to sleep in the wagon, with the canvas propped over us as a ridge pole to protect from rain or mosquitoes.

The ground was too wet to sleep on, and a wagon

box or "bed," as it is sometimes called in the West and South, is only ten feet long, hence the problem of four men sleeping in it when it would only accommodate two abreast. There was but one way to do it. The Doctor and I took the front end, under the seat, which kept the canvas from our faces, and the Afro-Americans slept with their heads to the tail-board, which protected them from the weight of canvas, but there was a lapping of legs, which was a necessary condition in a ten-foot box. We slept in our clothing, of course, but after a side talk with the Doctor I ordered that no shoes be removed. It was better to have bruised shins than to risk evils whose extent we did not know.

• Just how much sleep came to each one of the party was an unknown quantity. Some slumber may have ventured my way, but was not remembered in the morning. There was a sound of revelry in the frog pond, a croaking of night herons, which were combining the sports of fishing and frogging without partiality to either as long as the diet was sufficiently "fillin'," the hooting of one owl and the so-called "screeching" of another, with the occasional whicker of a coon, and the omnipresent song of the myriads of mosquitoes outside our canvas, and the jubilant tone of the few which had got under it through the low ventilating folds, seemed a continuous performance.

The night was long, close and stifling. The

necessity of a change of position naturally awoke others whose shins were creased by boot soles, and when morning came we were glad to lift the canvas, get on land and stretch our legs. After breakfast our teamster showed no sign of preparation for the start, and as the Doctor had turned all authority over to me I said: "Come, George, get a move on you; send Mose out for the mules and get ready to go on."

George was seated on the new wagon-tongue in the attitude of prayer, and looked up, saying: "Dis yah's Sunday, an' de Good Book says we muss'n' do no wuk awn dat day, an' I 'spects we has to camp heah till to-maw."

The fact was that since leaving the mansion of Col. B. and the Red River we had taken no note of time, but the proposition to lie in the mosquito-laden woods and cook because it might, or might not, be Sunday was a little too much for me, and there was the Doctor enjoying the situation, probably wondering what form my indignation would take. After meeting his eye I cooled down and said to George:

"If your conscience forbids you to travel on Sunday you may remain and cut wood and cook your dinner and supper, but I will take the team and wagon and go on to the river, where you will find your property when you get there. Mose! you get the mules up and harness them now; hurry up!"

"Dad he say we ain' gwine move to-day——"

"Doctor, hand me that shotgun! Mose, if you don't bring up the mules I'll put so many shot into your trousers that they'll be too heavy to walk in. Your young brother, Gawge, must have tole yo' I was a Yankee, an' was hard to keep from eating colored boys, but if you don't have the mules here in ten minutes I'll have you for dinner."

Old George, the Doctor thought, had no religious scruples about travel on Sunday, but he hoped for a pecuniary reward for doing it, and after the mules were hitched and the start was made he said: "The bluff didn't work, but it was fun to see it tried. These darkies are not consistent and are not truthful. George has not half as much respect for Sunday as we have, but on this occasion he paraded his respect for the day in an attempt to get money; it didn't work, and here we go."

The old darky took his place on the driver's seat as usual. If he was at all disgruntled by my action it was not apparent, for he soon began to sing:

"Roll, Jordan, roll; roll, Jordan, roll;
I want to go to heaven w'en I die,
To hear old Jordan roll."

He gave us snatches of other religious songs, for the plantation darky is fond of sonorous hymns, especially if there is a good chorus to them. When we stopped for dinner he asked: "Is yo' gwine trabbel all day?"

The deference with which he asked this question was evidence that he acknowledged my assumption of authority over him and his team, therefore I answered: "Yes, all day or all night, until we reach the river. We've fooled along this road too much, and the sooner you push your mules into Plaquemine the sooner they'll get a rest, and if you can't get them there to-night, I will."

"I dunno, I 'spect de rain's make de road sof', an' de wagon done pull hahd, but if yo' mus' get dah to-night we's gwine try."

As we started and the Doctor and I dropped into our places behind the wagon, he remarked: "I've enjoyed the way that you have issued orders where you really have no authority, and also the way in which they have been obeyed. The boy is afraid of you, and perhaps his father is also, but there is no excuse for more delay. We had only about thirty miles to go when we started yesterday noon, and can't have much more than half that distance before us now; but if you let George have his way it will take two days to get to the river."

Then I adopted new tactics. At every stretch of good solid road we would pile in over the tail-board and one of us would work up alongside of George and "feed" the mules with the blacksnake until they were wide awake; and we had over an hour of daylight when we pulled up at a hotel in Plaquemine, then a village of some 2,000 inhabitants. We gave

George enough to buy several new blacksnakes, and when I told him that I knew the mules could make the trip before night he grinned and replied: "Yas-sah, but dey done got some help wid de blacksnake, o' I 'spect we be back in de woods now."

We got a steamer for New Orleans about midnight, and next day Dr. Gordon voluntarily solved the riddle that I had propounded to myself. In the course of conversation he told me that his father was a rich Georgia planter, but he had run away from home with a circus when fourteen years old, and had gone North; interspersing his narrative with reminiscences of Dan Rice, Jo Pentland, Dan Costello and Tony Pastor, names known to every boy half a century ago, when a circus billed its clown as the star feature, and had only one, who was better known to the small boy than any of our statesmen. Two years of this life satisfied him and he went home. Then he studied medicine in New York and graduated; drifted to California and back to Chicago until the Civil War broke out, when he returned to Georgia and was appointed surgeon of a Confederate regiment. Afterward he had traveled abroad. Hence my failure to fix his locality by provincial terms and expressions; he was too thoroughly cosmopolitan to be so fixed.

The Doctor knew of a quiet restaurant where for three days we had green-winged teal served in different ways, and he declared that they were all so

good that he couldn't tell which was best, and that never, until then, did he know how much excellence lay under the feathers of a duck that was usually spoiled in the cooking. He said: "I will treasure your rule and never allow any sort of dressing in a wild duck unless the bird is fishy or sedgy, and the flavor is to be destroyed."

As a man of leisure the Doctor could hardly understand my anxiety to get back to Washington with my specimens and make my report; but some years later he dropped into the aquarium at Broadway and Thirty-fifth street, New York, and in the evening we ate teal in my favorite café, and in memory floated down the Atchafalaya River, hunted frogs and squirrels in the intervals of blacksnaking the ribs of mules over the roads through the woods in Iberville Parish, after time had obliterated all the discomforts of the trip, while memory retained only the pleasures which were magnified in the fog of distance and loomed up as our pleasures of the past are wont to do.

The past is all that we are sure of, and the "good old days" are always behind us, but when they were with us we still looked back or forward, according as we were old or young. It was with young men in mind that Pope wrote: "Man never is, but always to be blest."

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE TANGIPAHOA.

It took Pete a long time to learn that small, "no account" fish were as desirable as those which were large enough to eat, but what they were put into kegs of alcohol for he never did understand. The postmaster at Tangipahoa had recommended him as a darky boy who knew all the fishing places in the vicinity, and I engaged him to help Charles Bell and myself collect the fishes of that part of Louisiana whose waters flow into Lake Ponchartrain. He was a strong boy, quite dark, and was active when he wished to be, and he enjoyed the work.

This was in June, 1875. Prof. Spencer F. Baird was then the United States Fish Commissioner as well as the head of the Smithsonian Institution, and in his order he said: "After you deliver the shad fry in the river at such place as you may select, I want you to collect the fishes of the rivers and pools, keeping an eye out for trout."

"Trout in Southern Louisiana, Professor?"

"Yes. So many letters have been received from citizens claiming trout are native there, and asking for more, that, while we have doubts on the subject,

we can't deny their statements; and I want you to see if you can find a fish there which you will call a trout, and if so preserve it with great care." Then, with a variety of fishing tackle fit for trout, bass or pike, Bell and I started on what not only promised to be, but was a most delightful trip.

Coming down on the railway, before we reached Tickfaw, the fact that we had live fish in the baggage car was known throughout the train, and visitors came to look. In conversation with a gentleman on the subject of trout, he said: "Trout are plenty in all these streams, sir; yet from what you say you seem to doubt it. I was raised in the North and have caught trout in Vermont, Canada and New York, and I know a trout when I see it." That should have been conclusive, but the sluggish streams filled with pond lilies did not look trouty. I've taken trout in waters where pond lilies grew, but always in the colder parts of the pond; and here we were in Louisiana. "Yessah," said Pete, "dat-ta's a trout, sho 'nuff," as I landed a black bass of the big-mouth persuasion, and the old settler who was "raised" in the North declared it to be the same kind of a fish that he had taken in boyhood in the streams of Vermont. On returning to Washington I reported to Prof. Baird that I had fished diligently and had taken many fish which I called black bass, but which all the people about Tangipahoa called trout, and furthermore I had not seen a fish which I

would call a trout. The Professor merely said: "I thought it would turn out so."

On this trip we did not see a small-mouth black bass, and the largest big-mouth we took weighed eight pounds on the grocer's scales. Here let me get away from the story to ask why, in writing of the two black basses, we all agree to say "small mouth," while some of us use "big mouth" and others "large mouth" for the other fellow? There are always two sides to a subject, and a white native said to me: "I don't see what right you've got to come an' tell me that our trout are bass. They've always been 'trout' here, an' we've got as good a right to name 'em as you have." That was a clincher.

Tangipahoa could not only give us better accommodations in the matter of food and lodgings, but was nearer the Tangipahoa and Natalbany rivers than any other, and was therefore the place to make headquarters, and we captured Pete. The little village had perhaps 300 inhabitants, of assorted complexions, and we were genuine curiosities to them. There was no newspaper there; but the grapevine telegraph, which runs over the back fences in all country settlements, soon informed the people that two Northern men were there on all kinds of missions.

Pete may have been sixteen years old, but he felt several inches above his normal height when he

started on our first trip with a bodyguard of half a dozen boys of all the shades between ebony and light molasses cakes. Pete in front with the air of a drum major, the boys behind carrying nets and pails, while Bell and I tried to live up to the dignity of traveling with an escort.

As we walked down the railway track Bell remarked: "We have done well in getting Pete. He may not do much, but he has a host of volunteers for us, and the Government gets the whole gang for Pete's half dollar a day. I don't know, though, but we could have got Pete for a quarter a day, and perhaps he would serve, like the volunteers, for the honor, if he was only put at the head of them."

"What you say is probably true, Charles, but we must not grind the faces of the poor, and the people of America would not bless us if we saved them that little sum. Again, if Pete served us without pay we would have as little control over him as he would have over his assistants."

"That's so; but I was only moralizing over the love of authority that many men have and which is exemplified in this negro boy. Yesterday he was only a common boy like the rest; you have given him position, and see how he has assumed an importance among his fellows, and how they look up to him. You must admit that it is a true reflection of human nature, drawn in charcoal."

We had passed several pools beside the railway

where excavations had been made to throw up the roadbed in this very flat country, and I should no more have thought of looking for fish in them than in the temporary ones in more hilly lands, but a little thought showed me that these pools were permanent. A swirl in one of them caused me to ask a question.

"Yes, suh," replied Pete, "dese pon's is full o' fish, but dey's no 'count, on'y little ones. W'en we comes to de ribbah we gets big ones."

Ordering a halt, the boys unloaded the small fifteen-foot Baird net and started in to drag the pool, which was not over 75 by 100 feet. The result was a surprise. The long bag brought out a mass of fish life, and Bell made a rough assortment of it into the buckets and I went over them again. The supply of alcohol would not warrant keeping many specimens, and we were the sole judges, if not of the first class, of what was worth preserving.

It was practically midsummer in Louisiana, and the vegetation was rank, and I ask you to believe that the air was several degrees above what could be found in Alaska on the same day. Every darky boy was bare-footed and bare-legged. We had seen many snakes slide into the pools by the railway, but had paid little attention to them. The fact that these darky boys waded in where the serpents went was to us proof that the snakes were harmless. In one haul we brought out a snake and I promptly held

it under my foot preparatory to examining it, for I was on intimate terms with the dirty water snake of the North, having reached for him in a hole under a bank in my trout ponds, bringing it forth alive, striking me with its harmless teeth before I could twist its head off with the other hand. So you all see I was very well acquainted with the ill-tempered *Tropidonotus sipedon*, which lives on fish and frogs, and I thought this animal might be the same.

Pete called out: "Take cah, dah! Datta's a waw-tah moccasin, an' he kill yo' if he bites yo'." And he was right. It was a very deadly relative of the Northern copperhead and scientists know it as *Agkistrodon piscivorus*, and yet those darky boys went into pools barefooted where they knew this dangerous serpent lay, even after seeing it glide into the pool. This was a puzzle, especially as they were horrified to see me handle the snake after it was dead. I opened its mouth with a pocket knife, saw the poison fangs and pressed out the poison to make sure that it was a venomous reptile. The dark, vertical bars, in place of alternate blotches, proved that it differed from my Northern acquaintance.

Pete said: "Da moccasin he's good 'nuff w'en yo' don' 'sturb him. He git outah way ef he gotta chance, but w'en yo' put yo' foot awn him he bites, an' he p'ison sho 'nuff. He kill a da'ky boy las' year down 'bout Tickfaw, an' long time back one bit ole Massa Kya'ta (Carter) down by de big swamp, an'

he put a hot nail in de hole an' drink a pow'ful heap o' whisky, an' he doan die, but he leg got small an' he been ailin' since; can't eat no fat po'k, no possum, only cawn pone an' 'tatahs. How yo' gwine take bread in yo' han' w'en yo' had datta snake dah?"

"That's all right, Pete, I'll wash my hands before I eat. But, if you are so afraid of this water mocassin, how is it that you boys go into these pools barefooted when you have seen snakes go in first?"

"It's dis yeh way: W'en you go slow de moccasin he git out yo' way. On de lan' he see yo', an' in de wawtah he heah yo', so w'en we go in de wawtah we go slow an' splash an' make noise, an' he go 'way."

Here was an interesting bit of snake lore from an unexpected source. An ignorant darky boy taught me something, and was so sure of his knowledge that he seemed to risk his life on it. I say seemed to risk his life, because from his point of view there was no risk so long as he exercised a proper care. He was a scientist in his way. He was afraid to touch a dead snake, but just what reward would tempt me to wade about barefooted in a pool where I knew deadly serpents were hiding I have never figured out. During our stay I watched the boys and found they had a system. If our larger thirty-foot seine would sweep one of these holes beside the railway, it was done with boys on each bank; but if the pool was larger, they took it in sections, going slowly and making a great splashing. If we hauled

out some snakes, they cared little about killing them. Northern white boys would have killed them all, but these boys seemed to live on peaceful terms with this very common reptile, which is also called the "cotton-mouth," from some reason unknown to me. Perhaps Pete expressed the feeling of indifference to killing them when he said: "W'at's de use killin' a few snakes w'en dey's so many in all de holes an' in de swamps?"

Bell and I complained to the landlord that our beds were not made. The first time we thought it a mistake, but when it occurred again we protested. He called a chambermaid and wanted to know. She looked indignant and replied: "'Deed I isn't gwine in datta room 'mong all dem snakes dey's got in dem glass bottles, to make any beds. I'se pow'ful sot ag'in snakes, I is, an' I dunno wot men's gwine 'roun' gettin' 'em fo'. Ef a man wants snakes in his room he can make hees own bed; I doan gwin dah. Um-m!"

And so it came to pass that Pete was duly installed as our chambermaid. He had no fear of pickled snakes, dead and well sealed up; and from the disfavor with which we were looked upon by the colored girls we thought it possible that Pete's services might be required to wait on us at table. Our mission was a mystery that no explanation could solve. We were under more suspicion than when, as pirates, we had cruised along Long Island Sound

with the "Jolly Roger" at the fore. But then we proclaimed our mission and were understood. Now we were suspected of having some occult purpose, the exact nature of which these colored people had no clear idea. There were glances and whisperings. At last Pete let it out.

"Dey sez 'at yo' Yankees comes yeah to get snakes an' fish to take up No'th to make all de cullod people slaves ag'in. Is dat so?"

The question was an honest one and demanded an honest answer, but what could we say?

"Who says so, Pete?" I asked.

"All de gy'ls at de hotel who wouldn' make yo' beds, an' all de cullod people dey want to know wheffo you ketch snakes an' put 'em in bottles, an' dey tell me not to work fo' yo', 'cause you's bad."

"Anything more, Pete?"

"Yessah, dah's Massa Almy, a w'ite man up by de station, who says yo' is doin' bad t'ings an' ought to be stopped."

"Charley," said I, "this boy tells us a story which, read between the lines, means that we are looked upon as suspicious characters. He is honest and square with us because we pay him, but there is more back of it than he tells or knows. If we are ordered to leave the country for the country's good, we can easily and gracefully retire with all the honors; but, my poor boy, if it comes to a lynching party I should hate to die in so poor a cause. What d'ye think?"

Bell looked amused and replied: "This thing is very funny. As for the talk of the hotel servants, that's nothing. I don't like colored servants anyway, and the further they keep away the better I like 'em. Let's go up and see this duffer, Almy, and talk to him, and find out what he's got to say. We may knock a lot of fun out of him if we work it right. I know the old excrescence well, for I have talked astronomy to him, and when I told him the moon was shaped like a clam-shell and sometimes had only an edge toward us he said he knew that."

We sat on the steps of the railway station and talked with Almy. Suddenly he said: "I s'pose you don't believe in voodooos; most white men don't, but I've been studying voodooism, and I know they have a hidden power."

His remark being partly in form of a question and directed at me, I answered very truly that I had never paid any attention to it. With a look at me, Bell innocently asked: "How is the power developed, by gas, coal, electricity or solar heat?"

Ignoring the question of the young man, he said: "There's an old colored woman who lives close by here who has great power. After you go to bed, if she should mark a cross in front of your doorstep and you were the first to step over it, she would have power over you all your life. She could strike you blind, or dead, even if you were one thousand miles away."

"Datta's so," said Pete, "de cullod people 'bout yeah's pow'ful shy o' her, an' w'en de kyars run offen de track——"

"Shut up, Pete," said Bell; "you'll find some o' them pickled snakes in your bed if you talk too much."

"This is a new and interesting subject to me, Mr. Almy," said I, "and I would like to investigate it. Suppose we try it? Let her make the cross before our door to-night, and I'll make Mr. Bell step over it the first one in the morning."

"All right," said Bell, "it's a go. Here's a five-dollar bill for the old gal in the interest of scientific investigation. No doubt the amount can be put in the expense bill and the result of the experiment be reported to the Government, after which we will receive the thanks of Congress for being pioneers in a new field of observation."

Pete sat with open eyes and mouth, gazing at the man who was willing to sacrifice himself for something beyond his power of understanding. Mr. Almy gazed awhile at a fence lizard which was taking a sunbath on the hitching post, and then, in a tone deeply tinged with regret, said: "I wouldn't let you do it for all the world! I s'posed you didn't believe in the voodooos, none of the white folks 'bout yere do; leastwise they say they don't, but I know better." Bell was disposed to knock a little fun out of this man by asking ridiculous questions, such as:

"Could she make a marble statue change from a Roman nose to an ingrowing face?" But I looked at him in a manner that stopped his fun and explained our mission to Mr. Almy, and he understood why we wanted fish and snakes.

After we left our new friend Bell broke out with: "Well, what's got you? It's the first time I ever knew you to refrain from working a mental curiosity for all there was in him. Perhaps I alarmed him, and there's more fun to be got out of him by your own plan. What are you reserving him for?"

"Charley," I answered, "there are a few things to be got out of our friend besides fun. Prof. Baird did not send us here merely to have fun; incidentally we may have a little, but primarily we must collect fishes for more learned men to study, and this man, Pete says, is the best man to shoot big fish with a bow and arrow that there is in this parish, and I want to see the work and get a look at the fish, thus combining duty and pleasure while we are learning something. But if we go at him to 'knock fun out of him,' as you incline to do, we make him our enemy at once. The man is intelligent on all other subjects than voodooism, just as you may know more than he gives you credit for. I tell you, my boy, one man is not a fair judge of another. He thinks he is, but he measures him by his own mental tape, on which the inches are very long. Every man sums up his fellows, but he has only his own

measure by which to gauge them. As you suggest, we can get some fun out of his queer notions, but by ignoring these he will be valuable in other ways. Every man thinks he has the proper mental balance. He has no other to judge by. He thinks that many things in this world were unevenly divided, but knows that he got his share of brains. Let the man alone; he is seriously inclined, and what you may think funny when you are playing for my applause will not only exasperate him, but will make him an enemy. No one appreciates the unconscious humor of his theories on witchcraft more than I, but permit me to call your attention to the fact that the man who has the keenest appreciation of humor seldom laughs."

"That's true! There was 'Fat Jack' Evans, of Albany, who would laugh until apoplexy threatened, and when he got through couldn't tell the nub of the joke. But it is true that when you want to get a lot of fun out of some fellow who is really funny and doesn't know it, you mustn't laugh, or you'll queer the whole show."

Pete tracked a turtle and found its nest containing twenty-seven eggs. These we took to eat because he said they were good, but we did not care for them. We had seen soft-shelled turtles and a fine hard-shelled species over a foot in length, but we did not catch any. The people there spoke highly of the flesh of the latter, but were disgusted to know

that we ate frogs. Pete was our mentor, and from him we got the local names of the fishes. My note book shows that the fresh-water drum of the Great Lakes is a "gaspergou." "Warmouth" is applied to several species related to the rock bass of the North, while the names red eye, goggle eye, etc., were applied to the same fishes, and the darky boys disputed over the names with the ardor of scientists. "Brim" and "blue brim" were no doubt corruptions of the English bream, and were large fishes of the sunfish type, growing up to two pounds weight, and there were many new fishes.

CHAPTER XIII.

FISHING WITH A BOW AND ARROW.

ARRANGEMENTS had been made with Mr. Almy to go down the river with him in a dugout and shoot fish with an arrow, leaving Bell to fish with Pete.

I had often heard that it was thought to be great sport to shoot fish with a bow and arrow in parts of the South, especially in Louisiana, and now the opportunity offered to take part in it. Others had confirmed what my darky boy Pete had said about Almy being an expert at this sport, and in conversation he said: "Down the river there are places wide and deep where there are big fish, worth shooting at, and it is easy enough to float down twenty miles, but it's all paddle coming back, and while the current is not strong, it is not fun to paddle a dugout that distance up stream. Can you paddle?"

"Yes, I can paddle, and keep the paddle on one side of the boat and never take it out of the water, if necessary. I wouldn't propose to go if I couldn't paddle, for two are enough on such a trip, but I've got a better scheme. We'll go down, do our fishing and then get a wagon, take the canoe to Ponchatoula and put it on a freight train for home. How will that suit you?"

"Good! How long do you want to be gone?"

"We'll stay out two nights if the mosquitoes will permit. You get ready to start in the morning, after breakfast, and I'll send all the provisions that we want down to the boat, if you'll have something to protect them from sun and rain."

As we left Tangipahoa the morning was cool and delightful. A light rain in the night had discolored the water a little, but the little river was not high. Mocking birds were rejoicing in the fullness of life, each trying to beat the other in some difficult run or trill. The soft cool of morning and evening was delicious here, but the noon was torrid. We protected our faces and hands with tar and oil from the clouds of punkies, gnats, mosquitoes, gallinippers and an unnamed host of hungry phlebotomizers which thirsted for the last drop of blood we had. But while our exposed surfaces were well defended, our thin clothing was easily pierced, and so we made smudges of fungi in two iron pots and made the best of it.

Almy was greatly interested in my outfit of flies, fly-rods and reel. He wanted to look the fly-book all over, handle the gut leaders and play with the reel. The rods he did not think much of, from the scant attention he paid them, but after the inspection was completed he said: "Let's see you catch a fish with them things." He watched the process of rigging up and of casting with great interest, and when

a black bass took one of the flies and bent the rod he got excited and called out: "Let me get hold of the line! He'll break that little pole! Pull him in now!" and a whole lot of other advice. When I lifted a three-pound bass in the landing net he simply said: "Golly!"

I unhooked the fish and let it go, much to Almy's surprise, for in this land of plenty he had never thought that there was need to spare what was not required for use. He agreed that it was a sin to kill an animal when its flesh or skin could not be utilized, unless the animal was injurious to man in some way. He wanted to try fly-casting for bass, and while I feared for my tackle, I had a reserve in case of disaster. He promised to keep cool if he hooked a fish and to obey my orders. The rod was ash and lance-wood, and it troubled him to cast its length of nine feet without fouling it. I put the canoe ashore and taught him how to get out about twenty feet of line, and we started out into the river. After a few casts he hooked a fish, and checked and gave line as I ordered. After a short fight he reeled the fish up near the boat, and as I said, "Hold still, keep him there!" and moved to put the landing net below him, Almy tried to lift the fish into the boat pole fashion; the fish made a dive as the tip broke, the reel sang until the bass reached a tree-top, where it took several turns around a limb, snapped the gut leader and escaped. I saw the fish, and judged it to weigh

about four pounds. Almy had a lesson in handling light rods and a lecture on the use of landing-nets. A spare tip replaced the broken one and he brought a small fish to the net.

By this time the air was warm and close, as nothing stirred along our crooked and heavily wooded stream.

We went ashore to cook dinner. Wishing to see as many fish as possible in these strange waters, I put out two lines to the bottom, one baited with a big earthworm and the other with the tail of a crayfish, and soon had two fish in the boat; the worm having taken a big black sucker which Almy called a "black horse," and the crayfish captured a spotted catfish. "These," said Almy, "are the two best fish in the river, better than trout or buffalo." The sucker might have weighed five pounds and the other perhaps half a pound. We fried them, and I agreed with my friend. They had not the weedy taste of his "trout," which I preferred to call a "big-mouth black bass," nor were they as muddy as the buffalo. We had good salt pork for frying, and unless you use sweet oil you can't beat it much.

The river was so full of fish that you could catch a dinner in a few minutes, so we fished along and released the fish as we caught them, and I made a note of the species and their local names. The dogfish of the Great Lakes was a "bowfin," the fresh-water drum was "gaspergou." The name of "bass" was

replaced by "perch," and "sun perch," "red-eye perch," etc., were common, but I was surprised not to find our common yellow perch there. Neither did I find a pike, except a little fish of six inches, much like our Northern brook pike. About 4 P. M. the river broadened to a quarter of a mile, and about a mile down we made our camp on a low point and prepared for the night. We found a dry knoll, covered our provisions in the end of the canoe, which was raised on a log to keep dry in case of rain, cooked supper, gathered firewood and drift-boards to make a shelter alongside the canoe, spread our rubber blankets under them and lay down.

Almy was a good woodsman, was quite intelligent, and, with the exception of his belief in voodooism, as related in the last chapter, there was no sign that he was "off," or, as Bell would have expressed it, "had rats in his garret." All day long I had been interested in the abundance of life. Snakes, turtles and frogs glided, slid and plunged into the water; strange birds called, sang or flitted; kingfishers rattled and dove, while bitterns, herons and other birds croaked, drove stakes or pumped thunder. The wealth of fish and reptile life brought an abundance of the solitary birds which feed upon it.

Now, as an old camper and campaigner, who from 1854 to 1865 had slept more nights under the open sky than under a roof, I thought I knew a whole lot about the sounds of night. But on that point of

land, surrounded by swamp and lake, near the coast of Louisiana, it seemed as if the echoes of all the night sounds I had ever heard had come back and focused right there on that June night. Owls innumerable, and apparently of all the sizes that owls are permitted to be, screeched, laughed and hooted; night-herons "quawked," gurgled and fanned the air with their wings; shrill cries from other wading birds, to the deponent unknown, added their voices to the night's discord. I've tried to think of something to say of the voices of the frogs in this happy frog-land, but, like that historic man who was famed for profanity and was dumb when the boys pulled the tail-board out of his wagon load of apples when going up hill, I can say: "I can't do justice to the subject."

We found a breeze come up from the southeast about sundown and that meant freedom from mosquitoes and other insects, for they can't stand against a light wind. "Almy," said I, "this is delightful. Will it last all night and allow us to sleep in peace? I don't mind the racket, but I'm a sinner if I want to be tormented all night and get up in the morning too weak from loss of sleep and blood to enjoy the fishing."

"Yes, it is seldom that we don't get a sea-breeze here. We are only about ten miles from Lake Maurepas, which empties into Lake Ponchartrain, and not over fifty miles from the Gulf of Mexico, and it's open water most of the way to the southeast. You

know that New Orleans is between Ponchartrain and the Mississippi, and we could paddle there easily to-morrow."

Giving assent to his assumption of my geographical knowledge, which I had probably possessed in schoolboy days, but now relearned, I turned the talk to the racket about us by saying: "There is a frog here which makes a rattling sound like bone 'clappers.' I never heard it anywhere except in Kansas. Do you know what it is?"

"No, I don't; but it is probably one of the small kinds. Do you know that there are several kinds of frogs, and that some never grow big?"

"Oh, yes; in the North we have the big bullfrog, which may be green or brown, and the spotted meadow frog, with a yellow vest; the tree frogs, which we miscall 'toads,' and rarely a small swamp frog, with long legs and a white line running back of its eye. An old friend, who shoots and traps for a living, tells me that this little frog makes a clacking noise, but I never heard it in New York."

"That may be the little fellow that does it. I've seen 'em, but never heard 'em peep. That darky boy, Pete, says you eat frogs. Is that so?"

"Sure, and I'll cook you some to-morrow."

"Me? I wouldn't eat one for a farm."

"Say, what do we want of these boards over us? It's starlight and ain't a-goin' to rain."

"Don't you remember when we was a-comin' "

down the river I called to you to look out when a shitepoke, as you call 'em, was flying over—we call 'em thunder pumpers from their noise—an' once you dodged an' had a close call? Well, these quawks are 'bout as bad, and you noticed how they foul the shore. They cross this point further down, as a rule, but it is well to be careful."

In the morning the boards bore evidence to Almy's wisdom when camping in Louisiana swamps. A few large cumulous clouds were floating lazily in the air, and we were now to try the new sport of shooting fish with the bow and arrow before the sun got too warm. A long bundle of canvas was untied and the implements taken out. A fine cedar bow, six feet long, strung with a cord of rawhide, several ashen arrows about 3 feet long, and a light iron spearhead are the whole outfit. This spearhead has a flat, sharp point, behind which is a hinged barb, which lies in a recess until an attempt is made to draw it from the body of a fish, when it spreads out like the "toggle" of a whaler's harpoon, the arrow complete weighing about four ounces. There is a socket on the spearhead into which the wooden arrow fits so loosely that it falls out and floats when a fish is struck, while a light cord which is fast to the spearhead holds the fish.

After breakfast we shoved off and paddled out into deep, open water. There was no perceptible current here in the broad water, and not breeze

enough to ripple the surface and prevent seeing the fish. Slowly paddling along and watching the water over the side of the boat, I never saw so many live fish anywhere—fishes of various shapes and sizes, from minnows up to gars five feet long. "Shoot a gar, Almy," I said.

"No use to shoot a gar in the back, your steel will glance off his hard scales. A little later in the day they'll be floating at the surface, and then if you can get the arrow into its gill it's the only chance. Turn up by that tree-top. Steady, stop!" And drawing the arrow to a head, he let it go and it struck the water about eight feet from the boat, the wooden shaft floated up, and by the running line it was evident that a fish was struck. Gradually checking it, he gently pulled in a "black horse" sucker of some six pounds.

I had shot fish in Kansas with a rifle, and speared them in Wisconsin, but this sport evidently required the same care in judging between the place the fish really occupied and its apparent position, the refraction being greater the further away the fish happened to be, and it required more skill to speed the arrow to the mark than to hurl the spear or shoot the bullet; therefore it was more sport.

The water was not very clear, and while I could see straight down in the shade of the boat, one could not see far in the water at an angle, and it was inter-

esting to hear Almy discourse on the character of bubbles. The surface was dotted with those little bubbles that come from gases in the mud or from minute insect life which seem to simmer on the surface, but he was watching large ones and commenting on them.

"See that string of small bubbles slowly moving toward us?" he asked. "Well, that's a turtle working in the mud, and the air comes out of the mud and the bubbles seem to hang on long before bursting. But here to the left are brighter bubbles that come up swift and in patches; they break at once. There's fish feeding there, but unless they leave the bottom we can't see 'em. Paddle over the other side, in the bend where the weeds are, and we'll try it there." We found open places among the weeds and lily-pads and I watched Almy kill several fish, including a big gar, which he struck in the gills, as he had explained. His marksmanship at varying distances and degrees of refraction was excellent. He wished me to try it and I did, but my admiration for his skill increased with every shot I made. Finally I said: "Almy, there's a soft-shelled turtle crawling under the boat; shall I try him?"

"Yes, plug him when he comes out on the other side."

I shot and fastened the barb in him and he began to burrow in the mud. This gave the animal a purchase that strained the line to the danger point. The

water was too deep to dislodge him with the paddle, and in my anxiety I appealed to my companion.

"Put a strain on him," he said; "don't let him gain another inch, an' mebbe he'll get tired or mebbe the line will break. Try it that way a while."

"If the line breaks your spearhead is lost."

"Never mind that, there's two more in the bundle. I want that turtle to take home; it's all the game we can take, for fish will spoil."

I checked all progress at the other end of the line, and waited until the muscles which were working in the mud might tire. The hope was vain. I think he would have been there, hanging on until the close of this fading century, if I had not become weary of inaction. My friend offered no suggestion, but was contemplating Nature and perhaps revolving in his mind the mysteries of voodooism. The fact that if the line should part we might survive the shock gradually dawned, and from a passive resistance I slowly put an aggressive strain on the line, and it yielded.

The enemy evidently was not "wishing for night or Blücher," but for a firmer anchorage than river mud, for there was no sign of muscular exhaustion when he came on board and made our acquaintance.

No more shots with an arrow for me. I had a record; you may call it an accidental one if you wish, but still a record; and if the laurels were thin I can

console myself with the thought that they're much thinner where there isn't any.

Mr. Almy had not only opened up a new sport, but had taught me several things, especially about the character of bubbles coming from a bottom of soft mud, and in turn I could show him the relationship between aquatic larvæ of insects and their adult forms.

The morning was passing, the faint breeze expired and we returned to camp to sit in a smoke which just permitted us to exist, while it drove off our insect enemies. I often wonder if they suffer more than we from a stifling smoke, or if we brace ourselves to stand it, knowing that they are suffering as much, but that if we hold out a while the enemy will retreat and leave us in possession of the field. It's a question of pluck and endurance, especially the latter, with us; for if the smoke lets up for a moment the enemy will make a dash for your blood. With the man it is merely a question of two evils, smoke or mosquitoes, and he chooses what he thinks to be the less. Not so with this insect. If she—here I take off my hat to say that those people whom my boy, Charley Bell, if he were alive, would call "the scientific Alecs," have recorded that it is only the female mosquito which sings and bites—if she, I say, relinquishes the field it is because she is driven from it by a force that is irresistible; there is no choice in the matter.

The metamorphoses of the dragon-fly and the mosquito were unknown to Almy, and he listened to a discourse on them with great interest. But when I brought in a lot of enormous frogs, dressed and cooked them, he looked disgusted; but after seeing the polish which I put on their bones he sampled them, and I had the satisfaction of teaching a man who lived near the great Southern marshes to eat their greatest delicacy.

Somehow we had avoided the subject of voodooism, just as you avoid mention of politics when you know that your friend doesn't agree with you, and it seemed to me that a belief in the supernatural powers of some old colored woman was part of his religion, and recalling the fact that my own New England ancestors, two centuries ago, believed in witchcraft and preached against it made me lenient on this subject. He was a poor unlettered man, they were educated clergymen of the Church of England, and he knew as much about it as they did.

In drawing Almy out I found that he came from Tennessee and had drifted South as railroads were built, but his desire to shoot and fish prevented his getting steady employment. As we smoked he said: "Sometimes, in the fall, I hire out to the rice planters to shoot rice birds and go away for a month or two. These 'ere birds come down from the North in great flocks and destroy the rice crop. I take a dozen or more darkies out and try to protect the

crop of some planter while the rice is in the milk state. We shoot into the cloud of birds, but it don't seem to stop 'em from coming on. If the flocks come down on a rice field when it is in the milk stage, and they are allowed to feed for ten minutes, there's no use to try to harvest that crop; it's been gathered. Of course we pick up some birds and send them to market, and they are fat and fine. You mightn't believe it, but they get so fat that they can hardly fly, and in some places the darkies hunt them with torches and clubs at night and send thousands of dozens to market. The light blinds them and they flutter down, too fat to fly, and are picked up by hand or killed with a switch. In the winter the birds thin out, the rice fields give no food and they scatter."

Ah, me! And this was one of my favorite song-birds, the bobolink! In the North the male is handsome in its summer plumage, and its hilarious song has been likened to "striking the upper notes of a piano at random." In boyhood days I have shot them, and I hope to be forgiven. In New York markets they are called "reed birds," and I wish to say that I never bought one, but have on several occasions sent the birds back untouched—on principle—when they were served at formal dinners. If the Southern rice planter finds it necessary to kill the bobolink as an enemy to his crops, no man can object; he has a right to do it; and then you will please

remember that the male bird is in sober gray feather, and has no song to cheer the rice planter when he devastates his acres. That shows the reverse of the picture.

The Hallock game code, recently published, puts these elegant song-birds among those which should not be protected, and I protest! A short time ago a Southern clergyman, resident in New York City, was fined for shooting robins, and in defence said he "did not know that they were song-birds." He was right; no birds are song-birds after the mating and breeding season has passed; then the males change plumage and only use call notes.

For the benefit of my Southern friends, I wish that they could know the "villainous rice bird" as we know it—sailing over the meadows with its wings in a tremble of nuptial joy and pouring forth its soul in a song that the mocking-bird could not imitate. Some poet has written a song beginning:

"Tinkle, tinkle, Mr. Nincomb,
I am merry Bob o' Lincom."

But that was a merry song, and not at all to my purpose. There was another one which treated of the bird and gave words to its song, among which were "winter seeble," and went on to relate its death by a gunner. I would surely inflict the quotation on you if it was on memory's shelf, and therefore you may rejoice. Bryant has given the bird fame in his

"Robert of Lincoln," and there we rest the case of this particular bird and go back to the swamps of Louisiana.

We got some frogs to take home, some new minnows to put in alcohol, and then a darky with his mules took our dugout to the railway, and so on "home" to Tangipahoa. Bell and Pete met me at the station, and the darky opened his eyes when he saw the frogs, and as he preceded us to the hotel he sang :

"Sittin' awn de po'ch in de light ob de moon,
I took de banja down fo' to play a little tune;
De grasshoppas sing an' de crickets all dance,
De frogs try to jine 'em, but dey didn't get a chance.
Den get along, gals, doan yo' see me comin'," etc.

When we finally left Tangipahoa and bade good-by to the few friends we had, Pete took from his head a thing which he was pleased to consider a hat and said: "I'se pow'ful sorry yo' is gwine away, an' if yo' come back nex' yeah I want tu wuk fo' yo'. I doan mine wot dem wimmen at de hotel say. Dey say you is voodoo Yankees 'cause you is got snakes in bottles, but Miss'r Almy he say yo' ain't hu't nobody, an' he knows all 'bout the voodoo."

The engine whistled "off brakes," and Bell and I swung on board, waving farewells to Mr. Almy and Pete, with his bodyguard of darky boys; true and good friends, who stood and watched the train until it vanished in the distance. To those who value

friendship merely in a commercial way Pete and Almy would be forgotten at the first curve of the railway. Often they come up in a backward glance and their memories are sometimes with me when musing on the pleasures of the past.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON BISTINEAU LAKE.

THERE was good fishing, and a variety of it, in Northwest Louisiana some twenty years ago, and no doubt there are plenty of fish left; but I only made one trip down through that country and Arkansas, and it was a trip so full of incident that I could fill a volume with it, if I could get any one to read it. Fishing, shooting, gander-pulls and shooting-matches, interspersed with dances where conventionality did not bar out fun, kept me busy studying mankind as well as fishes.

The lake heads up in Webster, divides the parishes of Boissier and Bienville, and discharges into the Red River in the parish of that name. In Louisiana, "as every schoolboy knows," with a few million exceptions, the divisions which in other States are called "counties" are here termed "parishes," a distinction without a difference beyond the fact that in the early settlement of the State, and in fact before it was a State, the French, who owned it, divided the country into districts, to be ruled by bishops of the Established Church, and the names of the districts remain as of old. Bistineau Lake is over twenty

miles long by some two or three wide. At Buckhorn I found a darky who had a team and wagon, and also a boat upon the lake, and I subsidized him to take me and a five-gallon alcohol tank over the lake, some few miles off. He said that his name was Augustus Cæsar Trulo, and I never forgot it. A man told me afterward that his late master's name was Truxillo, and the corruption from the Spanish was evident.

Rod-case, creel, luncheon and all necessary impedimenta had been loaded, and we were driving through the heavy timber, over a rough road, in a lumber wagon whose jolts forbade prolonged conversation; but as we came to a comparatively smooth place where one could speak without danger of biting his tongue, I asked: "What did you say your name was?"—not that I had forgotten, but to get down to a basis where I might get a name that could be handled without having to run over the list of Roman and possibly of Spanish heroes.

"Augustus Cæsar Trulo is my name, sah."

"Yes, I remember; but on a fishing trip that is more name than I can sling out when I'm reeling in a fish and want you to hand me the landing net. What do your friends call you?"

"De people 'bout yeah, dey mos'ly calls me Gus, sah; but w'en I lived with ole Mass' Trulo, befo' de wa,' he call me Cæsah, sah. But he done got killed up 'bout Georgia, an' he had no fambly, so we boys

drifted from Opelousas up dis a-way. We's a-com-in' to de lake at de nex' turn in de road, jes' beyond dis swamp."

"Very well, I will call you Gus."

"Yes, sah; an' w'en I wants to speak to you, w'at shall I say?"

"My full name is Aristophanes Demosthenes Socrates Kego-e-Kay, but my friends shorten it into Smith, and you may call me so." And right then and there Gus and I got right down to plain, practical business principles and dropped all nonsense.

Gus had his own tackle and baits, for methods of fishing by the natives were a thing I wanted to study. He had a native cane, and it had been well selected for taper and for even distribution of strain. It was as good a specimen of that very good crude fishing rod as you will find in a thousand. He had no reel, but he had tied small brass rings at intervals, and one on the tip, and evidently depended on his left hand to haul in or pay out from a coil in the bottom of the boat. When his tackle was inspected it was plain that its owner was an angler, and I had fortunately blundered on the right man to take me to such parts of the lake where the fishing might be good. He had a can for live bait and a mosquito-net seine to catch them. Great was his surprise when I picked out a lot of his bait-fish and plumped them into the alcohol. The larger fish of this region were well known, and the only hope of finding

any new species lay among such as never grew beyond four inches in length. To explain the value of these to Gus would be a waste of time, but he was always curious about them.

"Dis weed-bed dat we's comin' to is a great place fo' trout, an' I'll drop de ancho' at dis end, an' move up an' aroun' it w'en yo' say so. I dun cotch some big trout yere in de las' May, an' dey's plenty lef'."

Knowing that all through the Southwest the black bass is called "trout," and that the natives do not differentiate the two species, and also that it would be useless to try to correct the nomenclature, I "drank the wine of the country" and spoke of the two species of black bass as "trout." Men have been burned at the stake for their opinions, but not in modern days. Just as I gave in to Gus in order to avoid useless argument, just so I would yield to avoid torture; but my opinion, like that of Galileo on the rotation of the earth, would not and could not be changed. I admire the courage of the martyrs, but not their diplomacy.

Gus watched the putting together of a split-bamboo rod and the attachment of the reel in silence; but when the gut leader was brought from its damp box, and the fly-book opened, his curiosity was aroused. "What yo' gwine do wid de fedders on de hooks? Is dem de kin' o' bait yo' use?" And he looked incredulous, but said no more.

"Yes, the feathers on the hooks are bait of one

kind; they look like insects to the trout, and we call them flies. If the fish here refuse them, I'll try your minnows."

"Dey looks like dry fodder fo' a fish, 'deed dey do fo' a fac', an' dey doan' look like de flies we has in dis parish. Is de flies in de Nawth all bright, speckled an' hairy like dem?"

"Oh, yes." It was easier to say this than to go into an entomological lecture on a subject that I did not fully understand, and Gus was so intent on my curious rig that I was ready and made several casts before he attempted to rig up. Then came a rise and a strike, and the reel sang. The play of the rod and the alternate giving of line and reeling in kept my colored friend dumb with excitement until the fish leaped from the water some thirty yards away, when he yelled: "Hang on to him, Mr. Smith; doan' let him break yo' pole. He's de bigges' trout in dis lake; he break yo' pole, shuah!"

"No, he can't break it, not if he was ten times as big. You get that landing net ready to slip under him when I get him near the boat. Slip it in the water alongside the boat, and don't frighten him by a sight of it."

"Yassah, but dat leetle pole mighty apt to break 'fo' yo' get dat fish to de boat. It's dun mos' bent double now."

"Never mind that! Get the net in the water, and don't make a splash. He's tired, and is resting as

he comes in, but will make a rush for the weeds or under the boat if you scare him."

The fish had rolled up on its side, nearly exhausted, and was led near the net. Victory was at hand, but it was victory for the fish, for instead of using the net Gus gave a whoop as he grabbed the leader and tried to lift the fish into the boat. I had a glimpse of a big-mouthed black bass, which might have weighed eight pounds, going off with my fly and some two feet of leader, and my remarks, after several expurgations and condensations, might be translated like this: "Mr. Augustus Cæsar Trulo, I much regret that you did not obey my orders and use the landing net. The great warriors after whom you were named would have made an example of you for so serious a breach of discipline. Your orders were explicit to use the net, and bless you! you poor, blessed, doubly blessed man and brother——" Here my notes are blurred; the stylus of memory's phonograph buzzed, but made no record on my note book, although there are blanks and dashes which probably had some meaning at the time. I suspect from the notes that I did not fully approve of the act of my boatman, and possibly I may have been angry and have said things which I would not say to-day. The events of the day assume an importance which is effervescent, and we often wonder how a trifling thing which happened years ago could have moved us as it did. To-day I

fail to see why my language on the occasion of losing a fish which I did not need should have been so vigorous. The fish was happy to escape, and to-day I am glad that it did.

Gus had dropped into that sensible state which follows a moment of excitement and said, apologetically: "'Deed, Mr. Smith, I see dat ah trout a-gwine undah de boat, an' I try to bring him in. Dat ah net I fo'get 'bout, 'cause I nebber use one. I'se sorry yo' lose dat big fish, but dah's biggah ones in dis yer lake, an' afo' yo' go dah'll be some cotched. I'se sorry dat yo' use such pow'ful strong language w'en a fish dun got away, 'cause dey's mo' fish to come, an' I'se been tol' dat yo' mussen' swear if yo' want to ketch fish."

By this time the leader was repaired, and a large brown hackle had replaced the last red ibis, and I merely said: "If another fish is hooked, don't you touch my line. I'll keep this oar here, and I'll knock you overboard if you do. Get that fact fixed in your mind, and use the net as I have told you. This rod is not made to lift a fish out of the water, but it can tire out a fish that would snap your cane pole. That fine silkworm gut is only fit for such work as the rod can do, and when I bring a fish to the side of the boat I want you to do just as I say; lift him in the landing net if you can, but don't scare him so that he will make a rush into the weeds. Have you got that through your wool?"

"Well, sah, Mr. Smith, I mus' ask yo' to 'scuse me. I nevah dun fish dis way befo'; de trout seem like he gwine away, an' w'en he so close by, seems like I mus' pull him in. Nex' time I try yo' way an' put de net undah him; but I used to pull him in awn de line."

"Why don't you bait your hook and take a fish? I want to see you handle one."

"Golly, Mr. Smith, I'se waitin' to see yo' cotch one on de little pole an' de fiddle string. It 'peared like he was goin' to break away fum de line an' break yo' pole, an' I got so 'cited I dun hole my breff, I did, fo' a fac'. Dat ah was a big trout to pull in awn a fiddle string, an' I'se jes' a-honin' fo' to see yo' cotch one. Yo' dun cotch dat ah one on'y fo' my foolishness, but I promise not to touch de line ag'in."

A few casts of the brown hackle brought a rise and a strike. There was quite a little fight, and as the fish was brought in Gus netted it in good shape. It was a big-mouth that would weigh about half a pound. Gus took a number with minnows, some large ones, but he became excited when I hooked another big one, and he came near repeating his former mistake, but refrained from grasping the line when he heard what I said. There was no time to argue the case, and my remarks were vigorous and to the point. They arrested the outstretched hand at once, and the landing net was substituted in good

shape. That fish weighed nearly nine pounds on the grocer's scales. We took twenty black bass at that spot, and two of them were small-mouths of small size. They jumped out of the water, and so did many of the big-mouths, and that excited Gus every time. He used strong tackle and whacked a fish in the boat by main strength, if the hook did not tear out, and there was but little fight. He saw a new mode of fishing which afforded more sport than his own, and when I said: "Gus, I've got trout enough and had fun enough with them; let's go to some other place and catch different fish," he asked to be allowed to take a "trout" with my tackle.

"No, Gus, you'll break rod, reel and line, and you can't cast a fly as I do. If a fish rose at the fly and you hooked it, you would try to lift it on the rod, and then the 'fiddle string' would break if the fish kicked." And so we went from the margin of the weeds to the deeper waters.

"What fish do you get out here?"

"Well, sah, we gits catties, pike, crappies, perch an' a lot o' kinds. I doan' know de names ob all ob 'em. Some dey calls 'em 'red-eye' an' some dey calls 'em 'waw-mouth' an' sun perch an' raccoon perch, an' a lot o' names, but dey's all good w'en dey's fried, 'cept de gars, an' dey's pizon."

A light wind took us up the lake, and I got out a trolling rod and spoon. Gus had seen the latter, and called it a "bob." He put on a sinker and minnow

bait, and I trolled the spoon. A heavy strike brought in a long-snouted four-foot gar, and Gus put his pocket-knife in his jaws while I cut the spoon out of his throat. If this ganoid had perished when most of its kin were made into fossils, the fish world would be richer to-day. It is very destructive and is not fit to eat. I asked Gus if he had ever eaten this gar-pike, which, by the way, should not be confounded with the silver-gar of salt waters, which often runs up rivers. The latter is edible, and I have seen schools of small ones as far up the Hudson as Albany, where we boys called them "sword-fish."

"No," he replied, "I doan' eat no ole gah, but I tas'e him once, an' he got sof' meat, but hees bone and hees skin is hard 'nuff. Some poor colored people eat um, but I can get bettah fish; trout an' pike an' crappie, dey's good 'nuff fo' me. But dis yah gah is de long-snout kine, an' doan' grow much longer 'an dis yah one; but down 'bout Opelousas I cotch de big kine we calls alligatah gah, 'cause he got flat jaw like de gatah, an' I dun cotch one long as dis boat, me and two oddah boys, an' we broke bofe oars a-clubbin' him awn de head befo' he keep still an' we paddle to de sho'. Oh, I tell yo', he take a man's han' off, an' knock him down wid hees tail."

The boat was ten or twelve feet long, and the size of the fish was guessed at and may have been exaggerated, yet Jordan ("Manual of the Vertebrates")

says that the alligator gar, or manjuari, grows to a length of ten feet. I had seen one of nearly eight feet hauled in a seine down near Baton Rouge, but to tell of this would prove that I knew the fish and would cut off further information; so I said: "That was a big gar. Are you sure it was as long as this boat?"

"Yes, sah, 'deed it was, an' longah, 'bout six feet longah, an' his ole snout was broad as that (about eighteen inches), an' some w'ite men dey cotch one down on Catahoula Lake mo' 'an fifty feet long."

"What was fifty feet long, the fish or the lake?"

"De fish, sah. But I didn't see dat one, on'y hear de boys talk 'bout it, and dey took a boat an' a piece ob a man's leg out o' dat ah fish, an' dey foun' his haid an' some more o' de man in de net where de fish he chuck it."

"Was the man dead?"

"Daid! Yes, sah, he was daid fo' a fac', an' all cut up. He was sho' 'nuff daid."

"What was his name?"

"I dunno, sah; he fo'got to tell what his name was. I 'spects yo' is habin' fun wid me an' dat fish, but it was befo' my time, an' I tole yo' de story as de ole man tole it w'en I was a little boy. Dey is some o' dem gatah gahs in dis yeah lake, but I doan' see none much longah dan dis long-snout, an' dey chews up mo' fish 'an de pike, an' de pike's good to eat. Now when de pike take hold a fish he take him end

on, and ef he get him crossways he turn him to get him in end, but dese debbils takes 'em crossways an' chaws on 'em an' mos' times cuts 'em in two an' was'es half de fish befo' he gits him turned; den he got to git annuder to fill him up."

I appreciated my luck in falling into the hands of such an observing man, and when we unloaded at the house where I was stopping I took what bass, pike and crappie would make a dinner for the rather large family and gave the rest to Gus; and as I paid him we arranged to fish again two days later, and in the meantime I would fish the streams with line and minnow net for small fishes, mollusks and crustaceans for the alcohol tanks. It is an old saying that a Yankee is inquisitive, and in the South at that time the Ohio Buckeye, the Indiana Hoosier, the Wisconsin Wolverine, as well as the Californian and the New Yorker, were Yankees as well as the citizens of the New England States. But I was put through a nightly catechism, beginning with: "What did you get to-day?" "What are you going to do with them?" and "What are they good for?" The first two questions were easily answered, but the third was a poser. To explain the relation of "little water-bugs" to other forms of life, and to man, was uphill work to a fellow who was aware that he was looked upon as a harmless sort of lunatic who spent his time in gathering a lot of useless things, but who paid his bills and was thereby entitled to spend his

time as foolishly as he pleased. It was not so much the questions as the consciousness that my mission was not understood, and that I could not make it understood by the men and half-grown boys from whom there was no escape in the evening. To be looked upon as a curiosity is embarrassing, unless you are a fat woman, living skeleton or "beautiful Circassian girl," and make a profession of it.

A stroll along the shores of the lake with a light double gun was taken alone, in order to pick up any object of interest without having to give a lecture upon it; and it is well to be alone sometimes. The day was overcast and foggy, an ideal day for ducks; but I was not expecting anything in this line, merely thinking to pick up a few shore birds, or "bay birds," as we call them in the Great South and Barnegat bays of Long Island and New Jersey, for the fall flight of ducks had not begun to this, the then greatest winter resort for ducks of which I had knowledge. To-day I learn that not one-tenth of the ducks come to the lake that formerly flocked there. The oaks which lined the shores furnished great quantities of acorns, which some ducks, especially mallards and wood ducks, love. Wild rice grew in profusion, and the little floating plant with tiny leaves, known as duck-weed, covered many acres and looked like a green scum at a distance.

A walk of half a mile brought a couple of ducks in sight, and as their eyes were better than mine, it

seemed strange that they did not move. A few steps, and more ducks came out of the mist, all ignoring my presence. Both hammers were let down, and as I made an excursion to the left to get behind the blind of the men who had the decoys out, the men fired six barrels, but I was too far off to see the effect. On reaching the blind there was a pile of ducks, about fifty, they thought, and they were shooting for the New Orleans market. There were many species. I only remember that they said that the mallards had not got down from the North yet, as the weather had not been cold enough.

At noon I sat down to eat my cold roast chicken, ham sandwiches and boiled eggs, which the good housewife had put up for me in profusion, and then sat still, thinking of nothing, enjoying a mere animal existence. My seat was a low log, near a spring, and perhaps fifty feet from a little stream which was on its way to the lake. It was a Rip Van Winkle spot that seemed to have hypnotic powers, and I was suddenly awakened, not by sound, for the leaves were too damp to rustle, but by a moving object. Gradually it assumed the familiar form of a raccoon, and my fingers clutched the gun. Then came the thought: "Why should I kill or wound this animal, which has as much right to walk this earth as I have? I do not need its meat nor its skin, and it does me no harm." The 'coon passed on, turning stones for crayfish or other things, with perhaps an

eye out for a frog. In writing of this a story of two men "frae the land o' cakes," who had been imbibing not wisely but too well, comes to mind. One said: "Donald, let's hae anither drink."

"Nae, Jamie; I hae enough."

With a look of contempt Jamie said: "Hoot! mon, you're lettin' your judgment get the better o' ye." And so on this occasion I sacrificed inclination to "judgment."

The walking along the shore was difficult; there were marshy places and fallen trees to go around, and none of that hard beach which affords the salt-water gunner good footing. I had quite a load of mussels (*Unios*), some sandpipers, plovers and other birds, as well as a few squirrels and a pintail duck which had recklessly crossed a point within range of my light gun, and while thinking of tramping back up the lake there was a sound of footsteps and my ears moved forward to assist in determining who might be coming. When one is alone there is always an intense interest in any one who approaches, even if he knows the country is at peace and there is nothing to fear. I never have this feeling when on Broadway, because man is so frequent there; but down on a lone Louisiana lake the passing of a mud turtle or the jumping of a frog has interest. Therefore I listened to see who was coming.

There was a period of silence, as if the intruder had decided not to go up this little stream, and then

the tramp on the damp leaves was resumed. I had enough ham, bread and chicken to entertain any fellow sportsman, if he were hungry and would only show up.

On the further side of the little creek a form loomed up out of the fog. It looked as big as a country schoolhouse, but when it came clearly within range it proved to be a good-sized bear, slowly going up stream after such small game as its cousin, the raccoon, was looking for. Here again I let my "judgment get the better o' me." I did not anger that bear with a charge of bird-shot, and, in fact, there was no room for several hundred pounds of bear-meat in my haversack.

The big sickle-billed curlew which I picked up on the home-stretch was turned over to the good woman of the house, with the duck, which she stuffed and baked; but I reserved the yellow-legs to be split, broiled and served "hot and rare" for myself. To those good people this seemed as barbarous as the stuffing of a wild duck with sage and onions did to me. Miss Melinda said: "That bird isn't half done; I don't see how you can eat it." And I merely replied: "If it was cooked more it would be spoiled."

Taste is largely a thing of education and familiarity. A bottle of olives had been sampled by this worthy family and rejected. Melinda put up my daily lunches, which always included some olives; but when I came back a month later she had cleaned

up the half dozen bottles left in my reserves and was ready for more. Jim, a young brother, said: "I like them yellow-legs and sho' birds half cooked jus' as yo' had 'em, but mam says they're no good; an' I'm glad yo' come back. Say, how long yo' gwine to stay?"

CHAPTER XV.

A GANDER PULL IN ARKANSAW.

"HADN'T yo' better stop an' see the gander pull this evenin'?" asked the landlord, after my bill for supper, lodging and breakfast had been paid and inquiries made as to the road that struck the nearest stream which, if followed, led to a branch of the Bodeau River.

"A gander pull?"

"Yes, we's gwine to have a gander pull, an' if yo' never see none, yo' better stop and see the fun, fo' they'll be a heap of it, an' as yo' seem fond o' spo't I reckon yo'll inj'y it," and he stretched his huge form in the doorway as he remarked on the prospect of a fine day for the "pull."

It was my plan to follow some small stream to Lewisville, where the alcohol tanks for such fishes as could be collected in Southwestern Arkansas were stored, and then to follow the little river down into Louisiana to Bodeau Lake. But the landlord's suggestion was tempting, and a day could be profitably devoted to the study of birds, for surely I had heard old Darky Sam say that the birds were as fine as he "ever see," and the "gander pulling" related to some sport with geese. A question to the landlord would

betray ignorance; Sam was the one to get information from.

"So the birds are fine ones, are they, Sam?"

"'Deed dey is, sah, as good as I ever hung, sah!"

They were to be hung. That fact was recorded, and a look at the "birds" proved them to be "sure enough" ganders, common everyday ganders, such as lead the flock on all occasions. And now that they hung them, the questions how, where and what the nature of the sport might be after they were hung, outweighed the number and kind of fishes that were in all the rivers of the State. Old Sam sat on an upturned pail, washing a piece of harness in another pail, humming an old melody as he soaped the sponge, and was absorbed in contemplation of the coming sport. It was evident that he must be humored in order to get at a knowledge of the rules governing the sport of gander pulling without exciting a suspicion that I was ignorant of a thing which seemed to be so common that mere mention of it was enough to satisfy ordinary minds, and a random shot was fired to draw him out.

"I reckon you've hung a great many ganders in your time, Sam."

"'Deed I has, sah! I'se reckoned de bes' han' aroun' dese parts, suah, an' dey sen' fo' me all obah, sar! Dey say I makes 'em slicker dan any ob 'em."

Beyond this fact that it was desirable that the ganders should be made "slick" the question was a

failure. Besides the tavern the place had a dwelling and a blacksmith shop, and a sign over the latter told that Jo Bevins was a first-class horse-shoer, and the ring of his anvil announced that he was within. Perhaps he could help to unravel the problem, and on the impulse I left old Sam singing:

"De hen an' chickens dey gwine for to roos',
De hawk flew down an' he bit de ole goose,
He hit de ole hen in de middle ob de back,
An' I r'ally b'l'ave dat am a fac'.
Den git along, John," etc.

Mr. Bevins was a short man, with a development of chest and arms much too great for his legs, and he seemed top-heavy. His keen eyes and ready response to my salutation showed a natural curiosity in a stranger who was evidently not a native, and in reply to my remark that there was to be a gander pull in the evening, for I had learned to drop the Northern term, "afternoon," he said: "Yes, and there'll be a good turnout of the boys from Prescott, Bourland's Store and Falcon, and lots o' fun. I reckon you're a stranger in these parts." This latter remark was partly in the form of a question, and he was told that a little pleasure trip and a desire to attend the "pull" brought me there, and I switched him off with:

"They say that old Sam is a smart hand at hanging ganders."

"Yes, he is, an' he ought to be; he's done enough of it fo' the last fawty year."

"He seems to make 'em slick, from what I hear."

"'Deed he does. He's got some secret o' making grease that's slipperier'n most grease, and he picks the feathe's offen the neck so careful that not a pin feathah is left, an' last year Bill Turley, one of the best gandah pullahs in this country, took his turn with eight othe's and pulled foah times, an' his hoss slowed down each time, afore he could twist that ganda's head off, an' it wa'n't an old ganda' at that!"

Here I had it, without any display of ignorance. Bill Turley was a champion gander puller and had pulled four times in his turn, the eight others had pulled three times each, or twenty-eight pulls on the picked and greased neck of a live gander before his obdurate head was induced to leave his body. Surely, this was an intellectual treat of a new kind, before which bull-fighting, with its disemboweled horses, was a degrading spectacle. Here was something which a horse might enjoy with his master, and who could say that the gander might not also enjoy the tournament and imagine himself the highly honored object for which renowned knights were contending, and by skillfully dodging some and resigning his head to more favored ones he could choose the knight upon whose banner victory should perch. Such a royal game was never thought of by Richard Cœur de Lion, Ivanhoe or the Black

Knight! We would witness this grand game, which was fit for princes, if they had ever been blessed with wit enough to discover it.

Returning to the old darky, I proceeded to impress upon him the fact that a gander pull had been an everyday thing in my experience by saying: "Sam, Jo Bevins says that you don't make the geese as slick as you used to. He thinks you put in too much butter and not enough tar, and the butter melts and runs off. Now, up in Izard County, in the northern part of this State, where I saw the last gander pull, the man who handled the birds said that he did not use any butter, and——"

"What Jo Bevins been tellin' yo'? What he know 'bout how I make my slush? No man know dat. Butter! ha, ha! He better look fo' dat awn his bread, ha, ha! He been tellin' yo' 'bout me fo' a drink, an' dat 'minds me, I didn't get one dis mawnin', been so busy dat I forgot 'bout it."

His game worked if mine failed, and after wiping his lips and hanging up the harness he pulled out a peculiar strap about an inch wide with a slit in one end and a hole in the other, and carefully oiled it. I ventured to ask: "What part of a harness is that, Sam?" He looked up with a grin and said:

"I reckon yo' neber seed many gander pulls, sho'. Dat's de h'istin' strap w'at dey's h'isted by so's it doan' hurt dere laigs like a string do. I 'spected dat dey doan' hab gander pulls in de Norf. You is fum

de Norf, so Misser Wilson said, an' my boy Jake he went off up dat a-way two yeah ago; Boss'on dey calls de place. I spec' yo' nebber seen him?"

Assuring Sam that I had somehow missed seeing his boy, and feeling defeated at my game, I strolled off up the road and into the fields to pass the time until dinner. It was a perfect autumn day, the maples on the higher ground just showing the different yellows, while those near a swamp were glowing red. In the shaded spots the grass was hung with spider webs, which still held the dew and made them gorgeous with a wealth of diamonds. The quail were calling from the stubble, gaudy jays screamed from the thickets and flocks of blackbirds chattered in the alders. A large fox squirrel ran up a persimmon tree that was red with fruit not yet palatable to man, and if it was to him he gave no evidence of it. A hawk moving in graceful circles next claimed attention, and while I was pondering on his mysterious power of soaring he descended and skirted the wood, poised, plunged and bore off a half-grown rabbit whose pitiful cries turned my thoughts into another channel. Nature had shown her beautiful, holiday side, and at once turned to show how pitiless and unrelenting are her laws! Hawks are hungry, rabbits are good food; and so the train of thought led to man and the fact that ganders are good food, and so to dinner.

While chatting with the blacksmith after dinner a

tall, powerful man of about forty years, with a well-trimmed beard, in which streaks of gray began to show, rode up on a clean-limbed iron-gray horse, dismounted and hitched him to the pole.

"That," said Bevins, "is old Bill Turley, and he's one of them quiet kind that 'tends his own business. But it won't do for any of the smart fellahs to go projectin' 'round him, an' they know it."

Turley nodded as he passed into the bar-room, and a glance in his clear blue eye confirmed the blacksmith's words, and I certainly should not "go projectin' 'round him." New arrivals were confidentially announced to me as follows:

"That old feller is Sile Johnson. He fit in the war and never gits drunk only at a rifle shoot or a gander pull; says he likes to see young men fight, but his fightin' day is done past. Yere's George Washington Simpkins, him on the gray. He's in for everything like fun, but allers gets too full to inj'y it. Them fellahs just hitchin' now is Ben Kellum with the bay mare and Pete Murphy with the black hoss; they are young sprouts just comin' up and both keepin' company with the same gal over near Bourland's. Excuse me, I want to see Turley."

From the seat outside could be heard the clink of glasses, greetings, laughter at some joke, mainly personal, more glasses and reminiscences, until the question of time began to obtrude. Old Sam sat on

the edge of the step and to a question he replied: "Dar's no hussle, sah! Dey has got to hab time fo' a few drinks befo' de contes', so dey can git lim'd up propah, and den Misser Wilson he doan' make nuf-fin' on de birds. Lordy! sometime de fust man get de gander fo' a nickel, an' as dey's all in I'se got to put up anudder one. Doan' make a nickel on dat work an' doan' 'spect to. It's de bar pays, but I got de work to do, and dey doan' gi' me no drink till I'se done."

A low-set brindle dog lay on the step near old Sam, taking no further interest in worldly affairs than to snap at the flies which chose his ears as a tryst or to dislodge a flea from its chosen spot, when down the road came a big yellow dog, tracking some boys who had arrived a while before. Brindle dropped his ears and raised the hair on his back, as the stranger turned to the house, and rose with great dignity. The stranger stopped, moved obliquely forward as if to get in the rear of the slowly advancing brindle; a pause, a spring, and the battle was on. At the first sound of the conflict there was a rush from the bar-room. "Form a ring!" "Give 'em fair play!" "Go in, yaller!" "Shake him, Turk!" All this in one breath. The yellow dog was heavier than Turk and had him by the throat and under him. "Five dollars on yaller!" shouted Ben Kellum. "I never seed him afore, but he's a winner!" and before he could furnish his money Turley quietly said:

"Young man, I don't want yo' money, but he can't lick that brindle for the drinks; will yo' go it?"

"Sure, all right; yaller wins for the drinks."

All this time the hold of the yellow dog was unbroken and the brindle was using his legs trying to get a tooth-hold on an ear or elsewhere, when with a twist he got hold of a forefoot and toyed with it until "yaller" let go his hold and lifted up his voice in a manner that signified that fighting was not just what he wanted, and after brindle was forced to let go there was a yellow streak down the road, and Bill Turley tapped Ben on the shoulder, saying: "Young man, the drinks are on you," and all hands went inside. Old Sam remarked to me: "Dat fool boy bet on dat yalla' dog, he he! I know that ole Turk, seen him fight afo'. He's Bill Turley's dog; two yalla's nebber lick him, nebber."

The time had come when, in the opinion of the landlord, everybody was in prime condition for sport, and he gave Sam a look that he understood, for he went to a shed and soon trundled a barrow down the road to a big oak-tree which stretched a great arm across the road and spread its branches beyond the opposite fence. The barrow carried a box which contained ten strong ganders with their necks neatly divested of every feather. Throwing a light line over the limb, he tied in his leather noose, gave a gander's neck a thick coating of grease and swung him up by both feet at the proper height.

Meanwhile the landlord's son had set his business table at the starting point, just 100 yards away, and under the shade of a maple. The men were mounted and each had paid his entry and drawn straws for turn. The gander had ceased flopping and was hanging head down awaiting the fun.

Sile Johnson, the ex-Confed., came first on a bay plow horse with four white feet. With a yell that scared a buzzard from a feast half a mile away he plied the whip and started. His coat was off and his right arm bare to the elbow, his hat left him the first few rods and his hair streamed out behind. Nearing his quarry, he shifted the whip to his bridle hand, raised his right and grabbed. The gander dodged and the crowd yelled. Simpkins followed on a big gray and greased his hand on the bird. Kellum, on a bay mare, and Pete Murphy, on a black horse, made clean misses. Then came Bill Turley on a strong iron-gray. "Bill," said a small boy, "he's a-waitin' fer you, an' ef you don't get him he'll get tired." As he started he pulled his pocket handkerchief, and cries of "Foul!" went up; but he merely wiped his eye and returned it just in time to grip the gander close to the head, and left the bird neatly decapitated in the air. Cheers went up, and as he joined the crowd he remarked: "Let's take something on the first goose," and the motion was carried unanimously. So far I had held aloof and escaped special notice, and continued to do so until

five tournaments had been run, the second gander to Murphy, third to Turley, fourth to Kellum and fifth to Sile Johnson. By this time the drinks had begun to tell on Sile, and Jo Bevins said to me in confidence that the old man was "beginnin' to feel tol'able numerous." But Sile proposed to celebrate his skill and invited all hands to the bar. He noticed me for the first time. My light overcoat had been laid off and his eye struck a Grand Army button. "Hello, Yank!" yelled he, to which I replied with the old picket-line greeting, "Hello, Johnny!"

"Put it thah!" said he, extending his hand. "What corps was yo' with?"

"Second Corps, Army of the Potomac, First Division, campaign of '64."

"Why, yo' pizen old Yank! that was Hancock's corps. I knowed 'em fust rate, ought to; met 'em offen 'nuff. Say! I was with old Jube Early; ever heah o' him? Bet yo' did, fo' we kep' yo' all busy sometimes; druv yo' outen the Wilde'ness an' doubled yo' up at Cold Harbor, hey? But you uns got squah at Pete'sburg, an' we won't talk about Gettysburg. But, say, if you fit with Hancock you've got to take a drink with me, Yank, yo' have, fo' a fac'."

The crowd had been increased by about forty men and boys of all complexions, and they formed a circle about us, apparently interested in the "Yank," who, in addition to that distinction, was a stranger and therefore a legitimate object of curiosity; and

with open mouths they awaited his reply. I took the proffered hand and hesitated. It would not do to refuse, and, while not a total abstainer, there were strong reasons for declining; the first was that the drink would be only the beginning of a series whereof the end could not be foreseen, and in which under no circumstances would I engage; and the second was the quality of stuff that was being sold by Landlord Wilson. Running this over rapidly while holding his hand, I said: "I am very glad to meet you now, much more so than I was in the places that you have named, and I am only sorry that my kidneys will not allow me to take a drink with you in memory of auld lang syne."

"Durn yo' kidneys! I didn't ask them to take a drink; but ef yo' fit with Hancock, an' in the first division of his corps, red clover leaf, wa'n't it; yes, red clover, le's see, Barlow, yes, Barlow's division. Oh, I ain't dun forgot everything. Say, Yank, don't yo' think I'm drunk. I'm gwine win some ganda's yet, but yo' gwine drink with me, yo' is, sho'. Here, boys, hyar's a Yank fit ag'in me an' mebbe the one 'at shot me in my laig. Say, Yank, did yo' shoot me? Ef you did yo' got take a drink, an' ef yo' didn't yo' got to drink with the old Reb. Ain't that so, boys?"

The crowd was unanimous, vociferously so, and to resist further would evidently give offence; so with the plea that ill health would not allow of liquid

indulgences I capitulated on condition that "just one, in memory of the Wilderness campaign," should be all that I would be expected to take. Turley remarked that I made a poor-looking sick man, and "he'd seen lots wuss."

"Whoop!" yelled George Washington Simpkins, lifting his glass, "I didn' get no ganda', but here's to nex' time. Keep yo' good eye awn the ole gray an' me ef yo' want to see a ole ganda's head fotched offen him in fust-class shape!"

"Spec' yo' didn' hol' sand 'nuff in yo' han'," said old black Sam. "Ho, Miss'r Wilson! I'se jes' a-honin' fo' a drink, I is, fo' a fac'."

"Yes, let ole Sam have a drink," said Turley; "'twon't hurt him. He's all right, an' he hangs the birds to the queen's taste. Give him one awn me."

"He's right enough," said Wilson, "and I want to keep him so until the spo't is ovah, and then he can have all he wants. Here yo' are, Sam."

"Fo' de Lawd, Miss'r Wilson, but dat ah glass am small; 'spec' he's dun shrunk in de wash. Say, gimme bigga' glass en dat; I hain't had no drink dis ebenin'."

"Hurry up, the glass is big enough!" But when the landlord's back was turned Sam filled the second time and drained it with the remark: "Dat ah glass am 'ceedin'ly small, it am, fo' a fac'."

The old darcy was in good humor now, and went out singing:

"De jaybird sot awn de hickory lim',
He wink at me an' I wink at him;
Says I, 'Missa Jaybird, how de do?'
Says he, 'I'm well, an' how am you?'
Den get along, John, yah-ha-ha!"

Old Bill Turley arose to a point of order and remarked: "Wal, gentlemen, ef yo' all got yo' thirst quenched, I reckon it's time to feel the necks o' them ganders."

"No hurry," said the landlord; "the evenin's young yet, an' the ganda's ain't in no hurry. How's that, Sam; ah they all right?"

"Dey is, fo' a fac', Missa Wilson, an' dey doan' git in no weavin' way 'bout gittin' dey necks pulled. Yah, ha! Dey ain' honin' fo' yo' all to git in de saddle, yah, ha!"

This gave the host a chance to say: "Now, gentlemen, yo' heah what Sam says, an' yo' all's got time to take one with me;" and without question as to choice of beverage the glasses were set out and the bottle followed. Sile Johnson, the ex-Confederate, was in the middle as they lined up, and, catching my eye, called: "Guide centre! Heah, yo'! dress awn the colors! You uns on the right touch elbows on the left! Gi' me that bottle! Wait fo' awdahs! Begin fiahing awn the left! Fire!" and he sent the bottle spinning down the sodden bar without accident. "Come up heah, yo' ole Yank!" he continued; "yo' got to take one awn the house, 'deed yo' have.

Yo' kidneys must be dry by this time. Heah, take the right o' the line!" It was the easiest, so I filled up with water, and we all drank to the house.

As the party filed out they passed me in review, with Jo Bevins, the blacksmith, acting as my aid and advisor, a trifle exuberant but suppressed while commenting, and his criticism was: "Thah's old Bill, straight as a string; nevah shows a dozen drinks more'n he'd show one. Sile's feelin' comfitable, but he's all right yet. Them two young sports shows it some, Kellum mo' 'an Murphy; but I see 'em throw off an' make like they's drinkin' an' spill awn the flo'. They's both coatin' the same gal, an' they's lookin' out fo' 'vantage. Look a' Simpkins! I knowed he's git his kish full fust thing, an' he's got it; but he's a good hossman, drunk aw sobah, and he's all O K ef he stays jess so an' doan' drink no moah; but he will. He'll git fuller'n a tick befo' he goes home, an' he'll——"

"Draw fo' places, gentlemen!" called the young man at the table, and he held the straws in his closed hand while they drew. Sile Johnson drew the long straw and mounted his big bay. He waited until the gander ceased flopping and hung its head limp. Touching the horse lightly, he started, and the horse, glad to be moving again, increased his speed until two-thirds of the way was left behind, when Sile plied the whip, and the four white feet of the big bay seemed like a streak of light over the brown

road. Within a few feet of the game the whip was dropped, the well-sanded right hand raised and the prize was won. The crowd, now increased to over 100, greeted the victor with a shout such as greeted a winner at the Olympian games. As he rode back he leaned from his saddle, picked the whip from the ground, and returning to the stand, dismounted with the remark: "The ole man's with the boys yet, yo' bet!" I congratulated him on his success and then we looked to see Simpkins mount. He was evidently drunk, but, as Bevins remarked, "The hoss is sober," it seemed that there was no danger. He started, plying the whip with vigor, and a small boy encouraged the gray with a smart cut from a hickory switch. Away he went, but before he reached the oak the gray was unmanageable and the rider tried to gain control without even giving the suspended bird a glance. The dust was seen a mile away, and a keen-eyed darky boy declared that his bridle had broken.

"The hoss 'll take him home all right ef he sticks on," said the blacksmith.

"Yes," replied old Bill, "but what 'll his ole woman say? Golly, I wouldn't like to git it, an' not a feather to show her!"

Turley walked quietly down the line until the boy with the hickory was reached. The boy was watching a squirrel running a rail fence near by and did not know of the coming danger until he felt a grip

on his collar and his own hickory raising welts on his back. His yells scared the squirrel, who dropped a nut and made long jumps for shelter; the jays screamed and the other darkies yelled with delight. "Oh, Mistah Turley! I nebber done nuffin'; oh!" and so he kept it up until half a dozen had been dealt him, and he went off crying. Turley never spoke, but as he returned the boys shrank back and several hickories were dropped. That part of their intended fun was spoiled. No other horse got a cut from the line of spectators, and I remembered that the blacksmith had said of old Bill Turley that "He's one o' them quiet kind that 'tend his own business, but it won't do fo' any o' the smart fellahs to go projectin' round him," and from his business-like way in this matter it looked like a very just estimate of him. Several colored men muttered what they would do if their boy was whipped like that, but old Bill did not hear, or if he did paid no attention to it, but certain it is that none of the grumblers went "projectin' around" Turley.

The other events were run without special incident, Turley getting two and Murphy the remaining two, and all hands went to the house again. I had lingered to observe several flights of wild doves as the sun was just dropping into the tree-tops, throwing their long shadows across the field, and was watching a flicker approaching rapidly, closing its wings, falling and then catching himself, as if nod-

ding, and rising again, when a little pickaninny informed me that "a gemmen want yo' cum obah," and I started toward the tavern. On entering there were cries of: "Here he is now!" "Leave it to him!" "I'll stand by what he says!" and similar exclamations.

Half a dozen voices claimed attention at once, but on my suggesting that if only one would speak at a time a better understanding would be reached, old Bill Turley stated the case: "They's a bet up an' it's left fo' yo' to decide, an' we want to know ef yo' see ole niggah Sam put up all the gandahs?"

"I did; I watched the operations closely, for it was all new to me and interesting."

"Did you watch him grease the necks?"

"Yes, I stood near him and saw it all and watched every start and noted each kill or miss."

"Did he grease 'em all, fah an' squah?"

"He did, he greased them all alike."

A shout went up and Kellum remarked: "Heah's yo' dollah, Sile," and then it transpired that he had accused the veteran of collusion with Sam and had bet that there was no grease on the neck of the gander that he had won.

There had evidently been hot talk and some danger of a fight, for the young men, Kellum and Murphy, began to show the effect of Wilson's whisky, but the two older ones were apparently as sober as if they had not drank once, although an hour before

this Sile showed evidence of frequent potations. Now he was merely good-humored. Kellum felt it obligatory to celebrate his lost bet and asked the party to the bar, which, by the way, they never left. After the drink Sile seemed to feel it a trifle, and opened up war matters by saying to me: "Yank, did you shoot me in the laig in the Wilderness?"

"No, my dear old boy, I didn't do it. In the first place, I didn't know that you were there at the time, and in the second I never knew that Sile Johnson was hit. Then again, I did not shoot anybody, at any time, for I carried a sword that was never loaded, and just told other men when to shoot.

"All right, Colonel!" I was promoted at once. "I knowed yo' wouldn't shoot me, not ef yo' knowed it, but some Yank shot me in the laig when I was loadin' my gun an' hadn't shot at anybody nur give no provocation. Didn't hurt much nur lay me up long, but it showed a mean spirit to shoot a man when he ain't done nothin'. Ain't that so?"

I could heartily agree with him since my promotion, and as the landlord had whispered of some bottles of ginger ale found in some out-of-the-way place, for which he had no call, it gave a chance to ask Sile and his friends to join me, for I began to feel mean to be with such a party and not reciprocate after such kind treatment and so many invitations to join them. So calling up Sam, who had been left

out somehow, I proposed his health as the best master of ceremonies at a gander pull in Arkansaw, and Sam grinned, touched his hat, said "Thanks, Cunnel," and took his glass brim full. After this Sam was in for every event and sang and danced to the patting of a darky boy until his too liberal potations made him weary, and he curled up on a settee with no interest even in a gander pull.

The blacksmith drew my attention to the two young men who were arguing something at the end of the bar by saying:

"They ar' beginnin' to feel putty numerous, and them's the two I tole yo' was waitin' on one gal. Listen!"

"I say tain't so!"

"You're a liah!"

Biff, and Kellum has the floor, with Murphy waiting for him to rise, as the Marquis of Queensberry has directed. Old Bill Turley quietly collared both, saying: "Boys, thar ain't goin' to be no fightin' 'less I take a hand. Now yo' all got to stop; yo' heah me?" Kellum was hot for satisfaction, and stated it as his opinion that he could whip any man in the house, old Bill Turley not excepted, and started for him, hands up. Turley took him by both wrists and held him as if he were a child, saying: "Yo' doan' whip nobody to-night. Now yo' all take a good-night drink with me, get yo' gandahs an' go home."

In the morning as I passed the blacksmith's Bev-

ins called out: "How did yo' like the gander pull, Cunnel?"

"First rate. It's an intellectual game that I will try to introduce into Central Park, New York City, when I go home, under the patronage of the Cruelty to Animals Society, in order to divert the public from the brutal game of football; and a gander pull seems to be the only one that Northern women can't rob us of, because they are not strong enough in the wrist. Don't you think so?"

"I dunno, I dunno. Ef they take a notion they'll go at it on bicycles and use canary birds, ef what I heah about 'em is true."

"Perhaps so. I've had a good time, thanks to you for many points, and when I come this way I will always remember that old Bill Turley is the kind of a man that smart fellows don't want to go projecting around. Good-by!"

CHAPTER XVI.

AN ARKANSAW TURKEY SHOOT.

SOUTHWESTERN ARKANSAS was a delightful place to linger in in the late December days, and there was good shooting, while for character studies it was an ideal place. Between the Bodeau and the Red River there were some good quail and squirrel shooting. I had temporary quarters with a farmer near Lewisville and had spent several days shooting quail. One day I wandered into the timber and brought out a lot of squirrels. My host looked at them—and fine large fox-squirrels they were—with something akin to contempt and asked: “Do you kill squirrels with a scatter gun up Nawth?”

“Yes, sir, as a rule, although a few affect the rifle. I have only this light shotgun, and, in fact, I never used a rifle on squirrels.” As this was early in the 70’s, my gun was a twelve-gauge muzzle-loader, and he had seen me do fair work with it on quail.

“Take my little rifle in the mawnin’ if you want to shoot squirrels, for they ain’t a ten-year-old boy ’bout yeah that would use a scatter gun awn a squirrel. No, sir; they’d pick ’em in the head ev’ry time ef they didn’t bark ’em. But in Arkansaw we are

brought up with a rifle, an' we never thought that a Yankee could shoot one until Berdan's men picked off our gunners very neat at Fredericksburg. I got it in my hand when I stuck it above the works to load. See here." And he showed me his right hand where a bullet had gone through.

"You got your discharge on that, I suppose. It must have taken out some small bones and made a bad wound at the time."

"Thirty days' leave was all I got then, but I got it in the shoulder and in the leg at Cold Harbor next year, and that knocked me out."

"Many a good man on both sides got knocked out there, but I didn't."

"Was ye with Berdan?"

"No, I was not a sharpshooter."

"I'm glad to know it. I hate them fellows, for they'd watch and pick off a man when they was no fightin' goin' on an' when he didn't expect it."

"That's so, Mr. Johnson; but you said something that I didn't quite get the meaning of. You said that the boys always hit a squirrel in the head if they didn't bark 'em. When a boy barks 'em, how does he do it?"

"Why, he just puts his bullet in the bark under the squirrel's belly and lifts him into the air dead, 'thout a mark on him. That's fine shootin', fer the bullet must hit jess the thickness of the bark under the squirrel, an' not go into the wood. My brother Sile

is coming over to a shootin'-match to-morrow, an' he's a good one with a rifle. You ought to go over to the shootin'-match an' see some fun. I'll let ye have a hoss an' we'll ride over, an' ye can enter in any of the matches if ye choose. We always have a turkey shoot on Christmas."

"I'll go, but I'm not a rifleman and prefer to look on. I met your brother Sile, with a lot of the boys from Prescott, Bourland's Store and Falcon, at a gander pull last October, when I was there, and I'll be glad to meet him again. At first he wanted to know if I was the man who shot him in the 'laig' in the Wilderness. He said that some one shot him, but who it was and what they shot him for, he never knew. He has hard feelings toward the man who shot him in the 'laig,' but he realizes that it might be some other man, and we are friends. What's the shooting-match to-morrow for?"

"It'll be for turkeys in the mawnin' an' for a bull in the evenin', an' they'll be lots o' fun. I'll see that a hoss is on hand in the mawnin', an' we'll go."

The darky boy, Sim, was holding my horse at the gate when the sun was just looking over the hill to see how the world looked on Christmas morning. The fog hung over the rivers and marked their courses for miles, and as I came out of the gate and said "mawnin'" to Sim, a high-hole flew across the road, just timing its undulating flight so that it cleared each fence, dropping almost into the road,

and after seeming to alight on the other side gracefully sailed up and fastened to the bark of a stub, and began searching for a breakfast of insects, worms or the different sorts of larvæ or cocoons which hide in such places in order to afford the woodpeckers a winter repast. Seeing my interest in the bird's movements, Sim said: "Dat ah's a clacker-mouth, an' w'en he finds a good feedin' spot he jess clacks till he calls all the clacker-mouths, an' dey come an' help eat what he finds. Jess lis'en to him clack now."

I had known the bird by the name of high-hole, high-holder, yellow hammer, clape, flicker, wakeup, dodger and pigeon woodpecker, as well as by the book name of "golden-winged woodpecker" and the cognomen which cold-blooded science gives it, and the new name of "clacker-mouth" seemed as good as any.

I put my foot in the stirrup, swung my right leg over the saddle, and Ben Johnson, Sim and I started off for the shooting-match, some six miles away. A crossroads tavern in Arkansas is much like the same thing in other parts. The bar is the main part of it and is the largest room in the house, for it is also office, reading-room and barber shop, and a chance traveler is fed and lodged upstairs. Across the road a temporary shed had been put up, with rude tables and shelves for the shooters. We were early, and as the darky, Pete, had moved his barber's chair into the woodshed and taken the crates of turkeys into

the field, I had no doubt of gaining his confidence by a direct method. "Pete," said I, "you see dis yere dollar?"

"Yass, sah; I sees it."

"Well, you keep it. I may want to go out and see you put up the turkeys some time to-day, and that's for you to remember me by; you'll know me when you see me again."

"I 'spects I know you, sah, fo' shu', but dat ah place whah I puts up de turkeys is dange'us, caze de bullits might come when yo' ain't lookin'."

Up came Bill Turley, the man whom it was "not safe to go projectin' around," and Sile Johnson, brother of my host, on the same old bay plow-horse with white feet, which he had ridden some weeks before at the gander pull. They dismounted, and Sile said: "Cunnel, I got drunk at that gander pull, an' I gin'ally do git drunk at gander pulls, fo' a man can twist a gander's head off as well w'en he's drunk as w'en he's sobah. But thah's a shootin'-match on to-day, an' a man who's got a dozen drinks in him can't shoot a rifle; he can't do it if he's only got fo' drinks in his carcass, an' I'm heah to win to-day, an' I don't take nary drink till the thing's ovah."

We men of the world are not surprised at such talk. Sile put the case fairly, but as Bill Turley never went astray to seek the worm of the still there was no such explanation from him, nor was there need of it.

I went out with Pete, and saw the hole in the ground where he and his turkeys were, and I counted forty birds, gobblers every one of them. I turned back to look at the guns. The horses were tied to the long hitching-pole, which is a prominent feature of every country store or tavern in the South, where all men ride horseback. There was a rack for the guns, and while the greetings were going on I looked them over.

There stood six of the old-fashioned Kentucky rifles, with their narrow, thin stocks deeply cleft at the butt-plate and stocked to the muzzle. I had not seen one in a dozen years, and the shooting-match came off over twenty years ago. These rifles were of different calibres, but all had the brass-bound box for carrying greased patches in the stock and had the same faulty balance of the old-time rifles, for the theory was that the weight should be at the muzzle or the arm could not be held steady. Jo Bevins, the blacksmith, said, as he recognized me: "That's my gun, and it's the best rifle in Arkansaw. Wait till you see me knock 'em. Just look at that thing Sile Johnson's goin' to shoot, with a peek-hole fo' a sight. Say, Sile, what is this thing, anyhow?"

I had picked up the gun and saw that it was a patent-muzzle target gun made by Billinghamst, Rochester, N. Y., and while heavier than the others was better balanced.

"That thing, as you call it," said Sile, "'ll show

you what it is afore the day is ovah." Then, turning to me: "That's one o' yo' Yankee guns. When I was shot in the laig in the Wilderness an' went to the hospital they brought in one o' yo' sharpshooters who was shot through the chist, an' this yere gun was in the stretcher with him, an' they set it up by him as he lay on the barn floor by my side. He was fevery an' I nussed him as well as I could, kept wet clothes on his haid an' wet his lips. But he knew he was a-goin', an' he give me some papers to be sent Nawth an' his gun. I had trouble to get that gun in the ambulance when I was moved out, but thah it is, an' Bill Turley an' me's a-goin' to shoot it when it comes to rest shootin' fo' the bull, and we'll use his Sharps rifle awn the turkeys."

Wes Martin had a United States Springfield rifle, model of 1862, one so familiar as to need but a glance. Pete had a turkey in the box and the box had a hole in the top, through which the royal American bird, which Ben Franklin thought should be our emblem instead of the uneatable and tyrannical eagle, could stick its head and a portion of its neck and dodge a bullet, after the bullet had passed. The box containing the bird was protected by a barricade of logs so that the small mark of the bird's head, at twenty rods, was all that could be injured, and a winner must "draw blood or kill." In the South and West they reckon distance for shooting in rods, which my training requires to be reduced to yards in

order to understand, and with a pencil I found out how far twenty rods was. The men all paid the entry fee, entitling them to one shot. If the first man got the bird another was put up, until each had a shot.

Jo Bostock led off after the whistle had warned Pete to get into his bomb-proof. The turkey dodged. "He's hit," said Abe Peters, but Pete's flag said "No," and Sam Stillman stood up and took long and careful aim. I was never a good rifleman, but Sam dwelt so long and his muzzle went off and on the target so many times that when Pete signaled a miss I was not surprised. "I'll bet five dolla's I touched him," said Sam.

"I'll take yo' fo' the drinks when the shootin's done," said Sile; and we all went across to inspect the head of the turkey, which was as clean and free from blood as when placed in the box. On the way back Sam confided to me the fact that he was the best shot in the whole State of Arkansaw, and that his old Kentucky rifle was the best gun that a man ever put to shoulder, and how it came about that the turkey still lived he did not know. "These niggahs," said Sam, "yo' can't trust. A half dollah, an' less, will make 'em signal that a tuckey is not hit when his bill has been shot off an' he's a-bleedin' like a bull. I have nevah missed befo', an' so I lost my bet because I did not trust that darky boy."

Wes Martin got the first turkey with his Spring-

field rifle, which they said was an extra good one, and there was a great difference in their shooting qualities. I went out and lay in the ditch with Pete to watch the turkeys. Pete protested that it was "dange'ous," but I kept watch of him and his signal flag. The sing or the wind of a close bullet would make them dodge with a ducking motion, as if avoiding a bee, but one that Sile Johnson's bullet cut on top of the head seemed dazed until taken from the coop, while one struck in the bone of the neck flopped about as if its head was cut off.

That morning, when all was over, I got the record, which was :

Name.	Rifle.	No. of Shots.	Turkeys.
Sile Johnson.	Sharps.	22	8
Bill Turley.	Sharps.	23	7
Wes Martin.	Springfield.	26	6
Jo Bostock.	Kentucky.	31	5
Ben Johnson.	Kentucky.	24	4
Abe Peters.	Kentucky.	31	4
Jo Bevins.	Kentucky.	33	3
Sam Stillman.	Kentucky.	35	3

The modern rifles were winners, although the landlord, John Brewster, said: "I tell ye the guns has got little to do with it; it's the men behind 'em. Sile, Bill Turley an' Wes Martin kin shoot the rags off the whole crowd if they swap rifles; that's all there is about it, it's the men." It is possible that there was some truth in what the landlord said, for I had studied the poses and style of shooting. Sile

and Turley both stood erect and did not extend the left arm to its full length, slowly raised the muzzle and fired when the sights touched the target. Martin moved the muzzle from left to right and fired when he caught the target. The others extended the arm, leaned back to counteract the heavy muzzle, and most of them potted about, especially Stillman, who dwelt on his sights as if shooting at a rest, and he was unsteady.

A luncheon was set out and cold ham, hot corn dodgers and coffee appeared in profusion, and after we had had our fill the darky boys found a feast. A turkey at that time and place was worth about half a dollar, and the landlord certainly had made no money at a dime a shot, with luncheon thrown in; for the bar had been neglected. Every one there knew that drinking and rifle-shooting were not good company; but the shooting for the bull was to come, and after that the landlord's harvest. There was to be an intermission of a couple of hours, and as I heard enough rifle talk I got our boy Sim to go with me to a stream a few miles away, and we mounted and rode away from the smell of gunpowder.

Sim might have been forty years old, with a leeway of ten years on each side of that figure. The song: "All Coons Look Alike to Me," had not then been written, nor was a darky called a "coon" in those days; but I never could judge of the age of a colored man, but he was a "boy" in the South until

gray-headed and "de misery pains" laid him up. Sim was much to my liking because he was an observer of the small life about him and had a fund of information on their ways and habits. After a gallop of a mile or two to get where the fusillade had not disturbed life, we slowed down to a walk, and Sim, knowing that I liked to hear him talk on his favorite subjects, began:

"Jes' lissen to dat ah jaybird in de bresh; he git-tin' ready fo' Friday, w'en he got to take sticks to de debbel fo' to make de fiah bu'n fo' a week. Ef he miss a week de debbel singe hees tail, an' so he calls out dat he's a-comin'. De jaybird he's de slickest one dat's got fedders; slicker 'an a crow, um um! He can tap a mockin'-bird's eggs fro de bottom ob de nes', an' suck 'em so slick she nevah know it w'ile she's a-settin' awn 'em, an' a crow nebber so slick like dat. No, no, a crow am slick an' can smell gun-powdah in a powdah-hawn, an' knows ef a man's got a gun, fo' ef yo' ain' got no gun yo' can walk o' ride close by de crow. But de jaybird's got de bes' edication, 'cause de debbel is his massa."

"It must take many bluejays to keep up the fires down below, Sam, if all the fuel they get is the few twigs the jaybirds can bring."

"Yo' ain't got it jess right. Dey's a heap mo' fiah down dah. It's all red hot, an' in some places it biles obah on de tops ob mountains; but w'en Noah let de jaybird outen de ahk de jaybird he up an'

sass ole Noah, an' tole him dat de dove dun pick up de olive branch floatin' on de watah, an' he could get mo' twigs in ten minutes dan a dove could pick in all day, an' so Noah he tu'n de jaybird ober to de debbel, an' dat's his punishment."

We saw many interesting things on this ride, and Sim stored my mind with much animal lore which can't be related now. On our return we found the bull out for inspection, and a fine dark-red short-horn he was. After all had seen him he was led back to the stable, and, lest some kind-hearted persons should think that the bull was to be the target, like a turkey's head, I hasten to explain the scheme. The shooting was to be at a target placed three times as far as for the turkeys and the rifles were to be shot at a rest. Eight men more had come to shoot and their rifles were all of the old style, but they had as many calibres and shapes of bullets as there were men. There were five quarters to the bull and therefore five prizes. The two first took the hind-quarters, the two second the forequarters and the fifth was to take the hide. There was a table with a notched rest for the muzzle and a stool for the shooter. The score was the old-fashioned "best three in five"; not the best test of skill, but they chose it. Sile Johnson shot first and then adjourned to the bar. What the Governor of North Carolina is reported to have said was on his mind. Pete put up a fresh target for each man and two hours passed

while I watched the contest. Pete had the targets marked for each man by his number and no shooter knew how he stood.

Sile Johnson and his brother Ben, my host, had been at the bar and were feeling very enthusiastic. They came over and Ben said: "See heah, Yank, we want to see you shoot. Some Yanks can shoot an' some can't. One hit me in that hand, see?"

Bill Turley came over and remarked, *sotto voce*: "These Johnson boys have done their shooting, and are now doing their drinking. You have not taken a hand in either; you held back at the gander pullin', but I want you to take this Yankee rifle and shoot in a friendly match with us."

I took the "Billinghurst" rifle and made five shots, and waited for Pete to come in with the targets. The judges gave the hindquarters to Sile and Turley, the forequarters to Martin and Bostock and the hide to me. That was three prizes for the "Billinghurst," one for the "Springfield" and one for the "Kentucky" rifle, and by this term I mean all those full-stocked, ill-balanced American rifles which were so popular with our hunters of a century ago and which won our independence from the mother country and again did such excellent service in the war of 1812. In their day they were the best of rifles and were celebrated in an old song called "The Hunters of Kentucky," with which a beloved uncle, who was a rifleman as well as a singer, used to treat

my boyish love of song. Up to 1860 it was not believed that a machine-made rifle could compete with one whose grooves were cut by the hands of the best workmen, and it required other years to overcome the prejudice in favor of hand-made rifled barrels. Something of this was shown at the shooting-match. Just how I happened to get fifth prize is a puzzle to-day, because I never was a good rifle-shot on account of eyes which always showed a blurr on things a hundred yards away, from boyhood, but which to-day, at sixty-seven years old, do not need the aid of glasses to read or write, but refuse to sharply define objects at a distance, and seem to be as good as they ever were. If Nature denied me good, long sight in early life she has compensated for it in later years, and it has been said that she is full of compensations.

It was Laurence Sterne who said: "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." But in everyday life we sometimes find that Sterne was not more infallible than the head of our Weather Bureau, and a few early-shorn lambs found dead in a fence corner do not bear out his assertion which some people ascribe to Divine origin. Yet there are occasional compensations just as there are occasional cruelties in Nature, for the laws are inexorable and one man is strong and another is weak; no credit nor blame to either.

After the prizes were awarded the fun began. Bill Turley and I did not care for the bar and we got

Pete, the barber, to get his banjo down and matched Sim and Mat, a waiter boy, to dance for our prizes. Pete started off in a 4-4 time and Mat started in. That is clog or hornpipe time, and Sim appealed to me. Pete declared that it was "straight jig" and the only time he knew. The crowd gathered and Sim was sulky. I took him outside and when we returned he scattered a little dry sand on the floor. I took the banjo and played him a rattling straight jig in 2-4 time, while his doubles and trebles tickled the ears of all present. I could hardly follow him in my ecstasy, for to me a straight jig on a sanded floor is the highest form of music. I say "music" advisedly, for you need not see the dancer; you may close your eyes and listen to him, as you may do to any soloist; he is to be heard and not seen, like "the little man in the tin shop," as James Whitcomb Riley describes the man on the right of the theatre orchestra.

The sun had gone down and the landlord, John Brewster, asked all hands in to supper, and there was roast turkey, boiled ham and roast 'possum. On our way home Sim said: "Golly, we boys was 'fraid yo' uns eat all de 'possum, but two was lef', an' dey was good, um—ah! Miss Brewster, she kin jes' cook 'possum. She hang him out in de frost fo' free nights an' den she roas' him wid sweet taters, an' 'possum am good an' sweet 'taters am good; but 'possum an' sweet taters—I, golly!"

CHAPTER XVII.

AROUND THE CAMP-FIRE.

THE snow lay in patches on the north sides of mountains, while in the ravines it was deep and soft with rain, so we camped on the north side of the lake, in a pouring rain, not an intermittent sort of rain that leads one to think that it may clear up in an hour or so, but a steady drizzle that had already soaked everything for two days, and offered no promise of ever letting up, for spring in the Adirondacks is an uncertain quantity as to weather. It was spring, surely, for the almanac had said so, and a woodpecker sounding *reveille* on a splinter on a dead stub nearby backed up the assertion of the almanac, but there was no other evidence of spring in the air. The ice had gone from most of the lakes, and the brook and lake trout were rising to such flies as are to be found near spring water even on the snow in midwinter, and there were two parties of two each in search of early sport and health. In each party there was one invalid who was more in need of ozone than of trout, while the other was a more robust friend, who liked to take his trout with ozone "on the side," or as a "chaser."

The two parties were strangers and had come to the lake by different routes, and had camped on different sides of the lake in tents. A northeast storm

had soaked the ground on the south side of the lake, and the party there, seeing the smoke from a well-protected camp on the other side, packed up, rowed across and introduced themselves. There was a stalwart bank president and his invalid friend, who had been run down by a siege of grippe, and who should not get wet, and who wanted the expected clear cold air instead of the "Scotch mist" which he was breathing. He was well provided with water-proofs and sweltered in them. He had been a paymaster in the navy, but was on the retired list. The president was a man of fifty, while the paymaster was his senior by many years. That they knew little of the art of camping was evident from their choice of ground where there was no protection from the storm.

The other party consisted of a man of about fifty-five, who had been a hunter, trapper and army officer, who was called "Major." His friend was afflicted with a complication of disorders, and knew that his time was short on this earth, but was as jolly as the jolliest, because he was a philosopher and realized the fact that it's only a question of a very short time with all of us, some a trifle shorter than others; but he never bothered other people with his troubles. We called him "Frank," and one of his favorite quotations was from Ella Wheeler Wilcox:

"Laugh, and the world laughs with you;
Weep, and you weep alone."

There you are, introduced to the whole crowd in an Adirondack camp in what promised to be a week's soaking rain, which would discourage most men, but not a grumble was heard. There was the president, the paymaster, the major and Frank. Four quite dissimilar men in their tastes and business habits, as well as physical conditions, but all with a love of fishing and each possessing a fund of humor, without which no man is companionable, in the woods or out of it.

The new camp was arranged on the sheltered north shore by the president and the major, and a stock of deadwood gathered for a camp-fire. The president learned how to ditch his tent, in order to keep the water from flowing under it, and the commissary department was organized so that the stores should be in common, and a menu for each day laid out, one able-bodied man should cook while the other should gather firewood and "police" camp. The major injected the latter military term into the camp regulations, and it means cleaning up company streets, and in army parlance "police duty" is cleaning camp. In our case it meant washing dishes, burning rubbish and overseeing things generally. If order is Nature's first law, then neatness is the first law of a camp, whether of four men or four thousand.

By supper time the camp of the newcomers was in order for the night. The heavens wept, with no in-

dication of a let-up. The four men had dined as the sun went down and had gathered under a fly to smoke. For quite a while the only sounds were the steady patter on the trees and an occasional rattle of big drops on the canvas when a gust shook the leaves above us. It was miserable enough, but there was not a grumbler in the party; all were equally miserable, but took it philosophically and made the best of it.

The president knocked the ashes from his pipe and remarked: "If there was thunder and lightning with this storm it would be something like a fishing trip I had on Rice Lake, over in Canada, some thirty years ago, when I was a young bank clerk on a vacation."

"Well, tell us about it, since it reminds you of something," said his friend, the paymaster; "there's nothing else to do, and perhaps it will put us to sleep."

THE PRESIDENT'S STORY.

The president put on a fresh log, kicked the old ones into a blaze, stretched his length on the bed of balsam boughs and blankets, and began: "I had done a little trout fishing on Long Island and in New Jersey, as well as pickerel fishing in the lakes near New York City, for there were no black bass in our East-

ern waters then, and I had read of the pleasure of the wilderness, where the roar of the railroad, the shriek of the steamer's whistle came not, and the silence of Nature brooded over the home of the trout, the pike and the deer.

"I merely intended to show that the poetry of the wilderness had been absorbed by reading of it, and the locality of Rice Lake was selected by reason of the stories of an older bank clerk, who had gone there in the autumn for the duck shooting; for the wild rice of the lake made it a famous feeding ground for ducks. He told marvelous stories of the fishing, of which he knew little, but which fired my imagination to go there.

"Rice Lake is in the county of Peterboro', Province of Ontario, some twenty miles back from Cobourg. It runs northeast and southwest, and is some thirty by ten miles in extent, and fed by trout streams, while the lake itself was the home of monstrous fish of many kinds. I had established communication with a half-breed Frenchman whose front name was Jean Baptiste something or other, for most French Canadians are christened Jean Baptiste or Antoine. In the former case they pronounce it Zhaw-Batise, all in one word, with hardly an accent on the first name. Therefore I soon knew my guide as 'Shobatise,' and a stalwart fellow he was.

"His log house on the western end of the lake was

a comfortable one, and had a neat garden and every evidence of industry and thrift. His wife was also a half-breed who had been educated at a Roman Catholic mission, and to my surprise she had a library among which I saw works of standard English authors. Her husband, whose translated name means John the Baptist, I will speak of as John. He could not read, although he spoke English after a fashion, and it was the custom of his wife to read Tennyson, Longfellow and other poets to him at night, for he dearly loved poetry. Three girls, from ten to sixteen, graced their home, and they also had some education from the missions, and when I add that the eldest had a piano and some knowledge of music you will realize that the mother of this family was no ordinary half-breed, nor was the father, even if he could not read.

"I had not escaped civilization; and as I climbed to my bed in the loft the strains from Balfe's 'Bohemian Girl': 'I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls,' followed me into oblivion. The opera-house had moved up to Rice Lake, and Caroline Richings was a half-breed girl who had somehow invaded that region to sing that song for me, and then to hear Devilshoof say: 'Come down for breakfus'; da sun he be up—a-soon an' we mus' go for da feesh.' It was the soprano of Miss Richings suddenly changed to the baritone of Shobatise, whose name I had transposed in John without objection on his part. A

hasty dressing, a wash outside the house in cool spring water, which was brought near the door in a V trough, and I was ready for breakfast.

"Mrs. John and the three bright-faced girls greeted me and hoped that I had slept well in their little home. I assured them that I had slept so well that between the last notes of the song and the morning call I was entirely ignorant of the fact that I lived. A good breakfast of trout, bacon, eggs and coffee followed, and the eldest girl placed a wild flower in my buttonhole and all kissed husband and father and we were off.

"John's boat was a fifteen-foot sharpie, with just the proper breadth of beam to row if the wind failed. There was a northeast wind, and John said: 'Da feesh be better in de sout' sho', 'long 'bout a fo'-mile p'int, an' it taka time to go, but I t'ink a-best; w'at you say?'

"'All right, John; you know best. I only want to have a pleasant outing and take a few fish. If you say go to the other side of the lake, go there; I am in your hands.'

"We crossed and trolled for pike and pickerel up and down a great bed of weeds on the shallows, and had taken many fish when John said: 'Da sun he pass de noon mark, s'pose we go asho' an' eat?' Those words awoke a latent appetite, which now asserted itself, and John put on sail for a favorite camping spot. We cleaned pike and bass, built fire,

and with the bread and coffee from home dined to our satisfaction. It is a first-class dinner that satisfies the man who eats it."

"That's so," interrupted the major; "I've made many a good meal off what civilians call 'hardtack,' but we call 'stovelids,' and salt horse or * * *"

"Major," said Frank, "you are out of order; the woods appetite may be closely allied to the army appetite, but this is not your story. If you will kindly restrain your ardor and not inject your approval or disapproval of the menu of an angler's camp it will facilitate the story, which our friend, the bank president, is telling us."

"Well," said the president, "we dined luxuriantly as the saying goes, and we were somewhat tired. We lay off on the point where the breeze kept the mosquitoes off, and dozed for a couple of hours. Then a violent thunder shower came up from the west, and we turned our boat over to protect us from it. The thunder seemed to split the heavens and give us a view of the vivid light beyond. The rain came in such torrents that the steady downpour of to-night might be compared to a drizzle. The storm was like that of the night on which Tam O'Shanter took his terrible ride:

'The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last,
The rattlin' showers cam' on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallowed,

Loud, lang an' deep the thunder bellowed.
That night a chiel might understand,
The de'il had business on his hand.'

"But all violent storms in our latitude soon blow over, and in half an hour the sun was shining, and we launched the boat and fished on our way back home. At the landing John took the sail and I the oars, he saying that he would bring a basket back for the fish, of which we had some twenty pounds. We leaned the sail and oars against the house and John opened the door, while I was busy with a fishing rod. The door had been left open and I saw him fall to the floor. Rushing into the house, I saw the mother lying dead across the stove, and her three girls dead around it. A great hole in the floor showed where the lightning shattered it and told the story. John had fainted, but I wet his head and face, slapped his hands and brought him to. He either could not or would not speak, and sat gazing at the hole in the floor for so long a time that I feared his reason had fled. Then, after what seemed to be several hours, he drew a long breath, groaned and cried like a child. Then I knew he was safe, and I sat with him until morning, when happily two neighbors came to see him on business. They took charge of affairs, set me on my way back to the bank, for I wanted no more vacation."

"What became of John?" asked Frank.

"He left the country, and a dozen years later I heard that he was up on Hudson Bay, trapping for the company. Poor fellow! I think of him every time I hear thunder or hook a pike."

FRANK'S STORY.

Frank threw a chunk of wood on the fire in a way that did more harm than good, and remarked: "Now we'll have a cheerful light when that gets started, but there is never any lightning with a week's steady drizzle such as this, no fear of it," and he filled his pipe, lighted it and puffed away as in a reverie for some minutes, and then said: "A thunderstorm out on the water when one is in an open boat is not the most pleasant condition of life," and he again resumed his pipe and his reverie.

"This storm, of which I was about to speak," said Frank, "could never have come up suddenly; it must have been growing for centuries, only we were not aware of it. The storm was sudden to us, just as a tiger is sudden to the hunter in India, but neither could have been improvised for the moment. So our storm had been nursed for months in distant parts of the earth, had grown to boyhood among the cyclones of the Philippine Islands, and being of a truant disposition, had gathered the strength of manhood as it passed around the globe and struck us

off the east coast of Florida before it wrecked the small craft off the Bahamas.

"There were two sail in our fleet, one carried Dr. Ferber and a friend, both from New York, and a native boatman, called Pete; in the other was the noted sportsman and ornithologist of Western New York, the late Greene Smith, myself and a colored boatman named Joe. We were out after tarpon, and I was to referee the case between Dr. Ferber, who declared it the poorest kind of fishing, and Smith, who praised it highly. They had argued it the night before at the hotel, and as I had never taken this fish and only had a reputation on striped bass, it was suggested that I divest myself of all prejudices and decide if the tarpon was a foe worthy the angler's steel or not.

"I accepted the position of referee with diffidence. Dr. Ferber was a famous angler for striped bass and a member of one of those great bassing clubs in and about Martha's Vineyard. Smith was more of a gunner than an angler, the son of the serious-minded abolitionist, Gerritt Smith, who tried to break the boy's proclivities for the gun by wielding the rod, after the advice of Solomon, but Sol's rod differed from that of the angler. Gerritt did not succeed, or Greene Smith, then some forty years old, would not have been in the boat with me.

"A light wind had wafted us out a few miles by noon and we had taken a beastly lot of skates, dog-

fish and sharks, but no tarpon. Smith was annoyed, mainly on my account. The sun was blistering hot, and as the wind was off shore we moved with it without feeling it. 'Joe,' said Smith, 'is this kind o' wind likely to keep up all day? If it is we won't be able to get back to-night. Not that we care, for we have grub enough, but the sleeping accommodations of your craft are not first-class.'

" 'I'll tole you, Mr. Smith, da win' he'll come stronger in de evenin' an' we get good breeze to tack home on in a couple o' hours. Yo' see dat leetle cloud way down low ovah da coas'? Well, he mean dat we hab a good win'.

"We fished away and as the breeze increased we saw a prospect of getting home before midnight, and were happy. Smith hooked a big shark that towed us along for a time until the other boat was nearly out of sight. When he landed him and we had killed him and cast him adrift, things looked black. Joe called out: 'I gotta take a reef, a storm come up quick!' By the time he had taken a reef it blew so that he had to lower all sail and let the boat drift. There was no lightning nor rain, only wind; there seemed to be no room for anything else. We were helpless, and night shut down early. We crawled into the little cabin, ate, drank and smoked without a light or a lookout. These would have been of no use, because we could not have controlled the movement of the boat in that hurricane.

"Joe was scared. His passengers had only themselves to lose, while he had his boat in addition to himself to figure in the losses. We filled up and—"

"May I venture to ask the nature of the filling—solid, fluid or linguistic chestnuts?" the Major interpolated.

With a wave of the hand, which might be expressed in English as "Shoo fly, don't bother me," Frank resumed: "There was no sleep for any on our craft that night. If one could have slept in a berth, being alternately stood first on one end and then the other while being violently banged on each side, between the acts, he would, in the case of land-lubbers like ourselves, have been kept awake by the novelty of the situation, if not by fear. That man who says he would not feel fear in a cockle-shell craft while being driven by a hurricane in a dark night on unknown waters simply lies—under a mistake. But the perennial and ever-blooming wit of Greene Smith kept one from thinking of the dangers. Even Joe, who risked his hair occasionally in peeping out of the companion-way into the blackness of darkness, and was the worst scared man in the party because he best understood the dangers, would be compelled to laugh at the stories, when he really understood a point, as he sometimes did.

"About sunrise the gale subsided and a few hours later it degenerated into what sailors call 'a tops'i breeze,' and it took us three more days and nights to

get back over the course we had been blown in one night. Dr. Ferber's boat was in before us, but his boatman, Pete, had been swept overboard and lost. He had been struck by the boom while trying to reef and the Doctor then tried to take the helm and put the boat about, but the tornado tore the sail from the mast and the man was lost. They procured an extra sail from a passing fisherman, and so beat us in.

"Pete's widow rent the air with lamentations and appeared to be unconsolable, but Smith, the only wealthy man in the party, passed the hat for her benefit, and, after all contributions were in, 'saw the ante,' as Dr. Ferber expressed it, 'and raised it out of sight.' If the widow did not rejoice, she was at least comforted."

"Well, how about the tarpon fishing?" asked the Major; "did you decide in favor of Smith or Dr. Ferber?"

"That's another story that I'll tell you some other time. Our friend, the president, has intimated that the paymaster has a yarn to spin of days long gone, and we will pass the tarpon fishing until the rain lets up."

THE PAYMASTER'S STORY.

The president asked his elderly friend, the invalid paymaster, about a shark story, of which he had heard a portion some years ago, and then lay down

on the blankets, where Frank had already stretched himself, to listen. The old man sat up, coughed and began: "It is not much of a story, but it happened so long ago, when I was a youngster, that it made a lasting impression on me.

"It was away back in the early forties that I found myself in the Paymaster's Department of the United States Navy, and detailed to the brig Somers, 266 tons, and the fastest craft in the navy. We had on board a lot of naval apprentices, cadets they call them now, and we were to cruise about the West Indies after we had found the frigate Vandalia somewhere on the western coast of Africa. We missed the frigate after chasing her to the Azores, Madeira and Teneriffe, and on reaching Liberia found that she had sailed for home. Then Commander Alexander Slidell Mackenzie turned our bow toward the West Indies and all hands were happy at the thought of getting home again. The winter was very near, and thoughts of getting home by Christmas were floating in our heads when, like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky, came the announcement that Midshipman Philip Spencer, son of John C. Spencer, then Secretary of War, under President Tyler; Samuel Cromwell, boatswain's mate, and Elisha Small, ordinary seaman, had been arrested for mutiny and were in irons.

"I will pass over the trial of these men and of their hanging at the yard arm and burial at sea,

Spencer in a rude box and the others in their weighted hammocks. There was a feeling of depression on the brig, all hands having been ordered to witness the execution, and we knew that others were suspected and were placed in irons, but were released in New York by order of the Secretary of the Navy. The occurrence made me ill for several days.

"We reached the Leeward Islands and anchored, in order to get provisions and water. Purser Heiskel and I were looking over the rail into the water, watching a couple of sharks swimming about. 'I hate a shark,' said the purser; 'let's catch one with a hook, since we are not allowed to use fire-arms on board.'

"I went below and found the purser's steward, John W. Wales, who had informed Commander Mackenzie that Spencer had approached him with a proposition to seize the brig and turn pirate, and he fitted me out with a big shark hook attached to two feet of chain, a stout line and a couple of pounds of salt pork for bait.

"We cast the bait twice before the sharks saw it, for they can't see far, and had sheered off by accident each time that we tried to get the bait in front of their noses. At the third cast it was seized, swallowed and the tussle began. Quartermaster Rogers gave us a hand, and we had the best end of the string.

"Midshipman Tillotson came along and said: 'Save that shark, because Lieut. Gansevoort wants the oil from its liver for his boots, and some of the rest of us may want some. Hang on to him until I get an order from the Lieutenant to lower a boat and secure the fish.'

"He got the order, and Surgeon Leacock joined us, and down we went in the boat. We hauled the big shark alongside, considerably weakened by his struggle, and I struck an axe into its brain and settled his accounts with this world. 'Get a hitch around his tail,' said the purser, 'and then slip a line about his waist and we'll get him in the boat, where we can open him and get the liver and let Dr. Leacock examine his other combinations, as he is always doing with beasts and fishes.'

"That shark was fully ten feet long, gauged by the length of the boat, and it had a fine big liver, which was good for a gallon of oil of the best kind for shoes, which are so often wet with salt water.

" 'Roll him overboard,' said Purser Heiskel.

" 'Hold on a bit,' said Dr. Leacock, 'let's see what the beast has in its stomach; it appears to be full.'

"The Doctor cut away in surgeon's fashion through the thick stomach, and after he had laid it open to his satisfaction there were the bones of a man's leg from the knee down, the flesh and some of the smaller bones of the toes gone in the process of digestion. The Doctor put the bones together and

said: 'It's the left leg of a man, that is a thing which an unprofessional eye can see; but if you will look closely at the bones you will see that there are bones missing on the outside of this foot which cannot be laid to the digestive organs of the shark. If you will remember that a man's foot was crushed when we left Norfolk, and I took off two of his toes and some metatarsal bones, you will agree with me that the leg now before us is the leg of Ordinary Seaman Elisha Small, who was hanged a few days ago. His hammock must have been improperly sewed or was ripped open in some way which we cannot account for, but here we have his leg and foot, which I identify as a bit of my own surgery.'

"We boxed those bones and had them buried over in Hoboken, after we arrived in New York, for many of us believed, with the press of that day, that the execution of these men at sea was not a necessity, since they were in irons within a few days' sail of New York."

The paymaster had exhibited signs of fatigue while telling this story of his younger life, every word of which is true, as may be attested by any of the older naval officers, and when his story was finished he spread himself on the balsams.*

* A reference to this tragedy may be found in "Men I Have Fished With," p. 39, where it is related that Spencer gave a copy of "The Pirate's Own Book" to a boy with the remark: "Keep this until you hear that I am a pirate." The poor boy was the victim of a romantic and adventurous temperament,

THE MAJOR'S STORY.

Perhaps the Major had been dozing, for the evening was getting late, but he roused up when the Paymaster had finished his yarn, yawned and remarked: "It was about the middle of June, 1864, when our division, the First Division, Second Corps, Army of the Potomac, reached Harrison's Landing on the James River. I was a first lieutenant then, and was officer of the guard. My regiment was larger than many of the old brigades, and we had to cross on several boats at night by embarking by the light of 'jacks' or cressets.

"About 10 P. M. I took my relief from one transport to the next, and observed a man sneaking between the steamers. After halting my men and sending one back for a lantern, I hailed the man, who replied: 'T'se a colo'd man, sah, an' I'se a-fishin'

led astray by writers who cast a glamour of heroism over criminals, the worst possible literature that can fall into the hands of a boy. Looking back at life—I am now 66 years old—I wonder how I could have been fascinated by deeds of crime, as I certainly was by the tales of noted highwaymen, pirates and robbers from Robin Hood and those who "robbed the rich and gave to the poor," down to more modern times. In after life I ascribe this entirely to a desire to perform heroic deeds, which, in the cases above cited, entirely overshadowed the criminality of them. The youthful mind does not make nice distinctions in the motives of its heroes; the fact that they are heroes is sufficient. Until I was 16 years old I inclined to worship the pirates, the highwaymen and such other outlaws as I read of, because they were represented as brave men, and what boy does not reverence bravery?

After this literary spasm of lawlessness, including Scott's "Tales of the Border" and poems, I fortunately lit upon Cooper's "Leather Stocking Tales." Here was a hero who was honest and who knew all the craft of the woods. Natty

fo' to get a br'akfus' fo' de ole massa an' his fam'ly. Doan' shoot me, pleas', 'cause I'se on'y fishin' fo' fish.'

"I went down between the steamers and saw that he was harmless, took twenty perch from his string and gave him a dollar, and sent the fish back to be served for breakfast. A shell from the enemy upset that pan of fish in the morning, and we had to fall back on the army ration, but about a week afterward——"

At this time Frank raised up and remarked: "Are you talking yet? All the rest are snoring and I only just woke up. You had better turn in and we'll all go to sleep."

All four men slept that night under one tent.

Bumpo, under the aliases of "Deerslayer," "Pathfinder," "Hawkeye," etc., should be my model, and a good model for a boy he is. It is the fashion to deride Cooper's Indians as untrue to life, but that is entirely the fault of the Indians. He painted them as they should be, and besides this, the novelist has as wide liberty to create characters as the poet has license to take liberties with facts. I do not recall any novelist whose characters have been subjected to so much adverse criticism as Cooper's Indians, delineated as either saints or devils, as viewed through the eyes of Natty Bumpo, himself a miracle of human goodness. When Commander McKenzie was court-martialed for hanging the men when within a few days' sail of New York, the newspapers of that day took sides on the question, and when he was acquitted by a majority vote the novelist, James Fenimore Cooper, attacked the verdict in a pamphlet, declaring that McKenzie's act "if not one of basest cowardice, was of lamentable deficiency of judgment;" and that seemed to be the prevailing sentiment as my boyish memory recalls it. I had seen Spencer in Greenbush, N. Y. His father lived at Hudson, thirty miles below, but I only dimly remember him. He was hanged in November, 1842, when I was a little over 9 years old.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CATCHING AN OCTOPUS.

As a school boy I had, of course, read of the influence of the Gulf Stream on the temperature of the air, but I had also read of the lotus-eaters, in the land where it is always afternoon, and one seemed as real as the other. But to leave New York in February, 1877, when it was so cold that the snow crackled under foot and the steamer was well coated with ice as we passed Sandy Hook, and then to land in beautiful Bermuda three days later and see the crates of early vegetables piled on the wharf, the men in straw hats and shirt sleeves, and to feel the warm wind, was like a fairy tale where the good prince is suddenly whisked to a land of beauty to find the charming princess and escape his enemies.

It took three days to learn where to go to get the best collection of live sub-tropical fishes for the New York Aquarium, and in the meantime to learn much of the town of Hamilton, the chief city, and its institutions, for this trip was my first one beyond the domain of Uncle Sam and everything was strange, from semi-domestic little ground doves, hardly as large as our quail, to the red-coated soldiers in forts, over which "Old Glory" did not float. I was a

"greenhorn"; out West the term would be "tender-foot"; or, as in New York newspapers some who want situations describe themselves, "lately landed." If I could choose the term to describe my mental condition in a strange land it would be the more polished one of "provincial." That lets a fellow down easy. The "provinces" of the city of New York and of the backwoods of Wisconsin I was familiar with, from the Bowery to the Bad Axe River, but here were entirely new conditions, perhaps I should say "of environment," to be technically correct.

When I decided to cross the island and make Harrington Sound the base of operations I first gazed upon Joe. He was a colored boy, lightly colored, perhaps of one of the shades of antique oak furniture, or of light ginger-cakes, and apparently about fourteen years old, honest face, bare-footed, straw-hatted with ragged brim, unbleached muslin shirt and bed-ticking trousers with two suspenders. The extravagance in suspenders was noted in contrast with the economy of our own Southern darky, who is usually content with one. But economy is not always commendable, a reserve to fall back on is often a wise investment, and Joe had it, in case of accident.

Joe had been brought up on the water and could manage a boat either with sail or oar, and for a stipulated amount of £ s. d. he enlisted in my service.

He told me that the oysters of Bermuda were not good to eat. This, to a man who had heard so much about good food that was cast aside because some fellow's grandfather did not eat it, made me anxious to eat a Bermuda oyster. In the West they reviled the "mud hen," the "bluepeter" of North Carolina, a very good table bird, and the fishermen of the Connecticut River refused sturgeon, the royal dish of England's sovereign, and I had eaten the "proteus," the "lizard" of the Great Lakes, and was unconsciously fitting myself to be a founder of the once famous "Ichthyophagous Club," of New York, which proclaimed that everything that came from the water was good to eat, if you knew how to prepare it. Of course I would eat the Bermuda oyster, and I did.

In early boyhood a boy induced me to bite into an "Indian turnip," and then that boy and I fought all over a ten-acre lot, and for weeks after when we met. With mouth aflame, for it got no further, I could not fight Joe, for he had warned me, but the burning was intense—it was agony. Joe ran off and brought some leaves of oleander, which grows on the shore in the salt spray, and told me to chew them, and a partial relief came. Most of the mollusks of Bermuda are either acrid or astringent; in some cases they possess both qualities. This knowledge was obtained at first hand by what may be properly called "bitter experience." If there is

an edible mollusk in the Gulf Stream I failed to find it.

If Hamilton had been a surprise to me as a city without dirt, and the white country roads cut through the sandy formation on top of the coral reef—for I believe these islands are the only ones of coral formation on our side of the Atlantic—were wonders, they were only a prelude to more. Carpenters sawed the sandy rock into blocks for building, and into "slates" for roofing, with common hand-saws, and then let the blocks or slabs harden. All this was strange enough, but the water surrounding the island seemed like that which one could only expect in fairyland. No rivers, creeks or even springs, to bring in soil to cloud the water; it was as clear as glass at all stages of the tide.

For a day or two Joe rowed me about into coral caves, floored with brilliant sea anemones and bright with gaudy fishes hovering above them. To him it was an everyday scene, and he took no more delight in it than a man born in the wildest mountains does in the grandest view of peaks and valleys. A man who has always drunk water from a mountain spring has no idea of the taste of good water. Let him spend a summer in New York City, or, preferably, Brooklyn, and then send him back to his mountain spring and he is educated as far as drinking-water goes. He never tasted water until his return. My case was similar. I had fished in salt water, but

not in the clear, pure water of the Gulf Stream, where a large fish could be seen at a depth of fifty feet.

A few days of this, with trips to St. George's, Somerset and Ireland islands in Joe's sloop gave me an idea of where I wanted to make a base of operation, and no place offered better facilities for collecting than Harrington Sound. The first thing to be done was to prepare cars to keep fish alive in, and one specially designed for the keeping of an octopus, if only an octopus would come our way. Joe grinned every time I spoke of capturing a live octopus. I've been shaking up my memory to bring up the name that the Bermuda fishermen have for this animal, but the name refuses to come to the surface. It's a queer name, and will probably come to mind some months hence, when I'm not thinking of octopods; that's the way memory has of playing hide-and-seek. When you seek she hides until one has lost all interest in what she hides, and then, when it is of no use, she pops out.

"Joe," said I, "we must get an octopus; it's worth more to me than all the fishes we can get. Tell the fishermen that I'll give \$10 for a live one, and if you put me in the way of catching one you shall have the money, in addition to your pay. What do you say?"

"No fisherman ever bothers that thing, only just kills 'em. I know I do' want to trouble one, an' I

'spects you won't want to own one when you see him alive."

Joe could hardly have read Victor Hugo's "Toilers of the Sea," where he makes a dreadful beast out of several kindred creatures; but it seemed that not only Joe, but all the Bermuda fishermen, feared this harmless little crab-eating animal, whose body is but little bigger than a man's fist and whose eight arms seldom make a circle of four feet diameter. With this animal, the cuttlefish and the giant squid, the "kraaken" of Pontipidan, Hugo, like a true showman, made a "devilfish." I had only seen the octopus in alcohol, but had accurate information as to its character and powers, and would try to capture one if one could be found. I knew that the sucking discs on its "arms" were soft, and unprovided with those toothed rims of cartilage which the decapods, or squids, have, and when I told Joe that I would take one in my hand he showed his ivories and said: "I 'spect you'd jump out of the boat if one come in after you. We kills 'em by drivin' a stake through 'em, an' w'en one comes outen de water on a stake he takes charge o' that stake; he takes charge o' the boat, an' he'll take charge o' you, too!"

Some two weeks later a man brought me a live octopus on a stake, which had been driven through its body. I declined to buy it, and the man was as surprised as Joe was that I should expect to get one by any other method. "No, sir," said he, "that

thing would wind about a man's neck and choke him to death. No man on any of these islands would try to get one if he didn't pin him first." He evidently thought me foolish and ignorant, but did not volunteer an opinion on that subject. He seemed to regret that I would not buy an octopus in the only condition in which he thought it possible to capture one.

We fished with hand-line for the smaller fishes, all beautiful—the grunts, striped with green and red; the squirrel, a bright red, and the angelfish, whose gaudy colors give it its name. Such colors I had never seen on fishes before, and the question arose as to the number that the tanks could safely carry, and if some had to be discarded which to leave behind. I had bargained for some large groupers with the proprietor of the "Devil's Hole," and felt easy on that score. The hole, as I remember it, was about twenty feet in diameter and some sixty feet deep. The tide ebbed and flowed in it, and you could see clearly to the bottom, and it was well stocked with handsome fishes, large and small, which were fed daily. A high board fence kept out all persons who did not care to part with a shilling, currency of the realm, to pass through the gate and gaze into the "Devil's Hole."

One morning Joe said: "I know where a —— has a hole." He meant an octopus, but used the local name, now mislaid. The animal is very local. It makes a home in a hole in the coral rock, or in the

weeds, and lays out its tentacles to fasten on to a careless fish or crab which may chance to pass. After rowing over the ground several times, Joe found the spot, but only a person familiar with the habits of the octopus would have noticed anything unusual among the bunches of coral, sponges, brainstones and other things which covered the bottom and cast shadows here and there. I certainly would not have given the dark spot a second look, yet there, in about ten feet of water, lay the animal, curled up in its hole, showing a bit of dark skin and part of a tentacle which was not unlike many other things on the bottom. Our movements had alarmed the mollusk and it had coiled up and was keeping still. Its burrow faced the south and the current. We anchored our boat at both ends across the current, north of the burrow, where its shadow would cause no alarm.

"Now, what you goin' to do?" Joe asked.

"Nothing, only to keep perfectly still and see what that fellow below is going to do. I want you to keep still. Don't rock the boat nor strike your foot on the bottom, that's all."

Joe sat in one end of the boat and I in the middle, close to a can containing several live squirrel fish, about eight inches long and nearly the color of a boiled lobster, only brighter. I had a deep landing net with a 24-inch rim in a 15-foot staff, the bag of the net being three feet long, with a full, round bot-

tom. This I placed on the bottom of the sound, held there by the side of the boat and something on the bottom, the current keeping the bag wide open. Then I lit my pipe and watched what went on below. Brilliant fishes, which are never seen north of the Gulf Stream, played about; now feeding on some smaller life and now chasing each other in play. Crabs crawled about, seeming to avoid the anemones and other stinging things, although their shells may have been complete protection, and I smoked and wondered if any living thing could eat a sea-anemone or a jellyfish, both of which can sting a man after the manner of the weed we call a nettle, and can paralyze some forms of life on which they feed.

It was getting toward noon, and Joe awoke from a drowse and said he was hungry, so cautioning him to keep quiet and to throw nothing overboard, I raised the lid of the commissary department and passed him a plate containing some slices of boiled ham, three eggs, a loaf of bread and a bottle of coffee. I found that I began to feel as Joe did, only I would not refuse sardines and olives as he had done. After Joe had obliterated a second helping, nearly as bountiful as the first, he slid into a recumbent position and settled back into the slumber which a desire for food had disturbed. I again lighted my pipe and resumed observations on the enemy, while musing on the capacity of darky boys for food and sleep.

Hours passed. The impression that I had was that the octopus, which lay some ten feet below and half that distance in our front, had dined, just as Joe did, and had curled up, like Joe, mentally saying: "Fate cannot harm me, I have dined to-day."

If I became drowsy no harm was done; there was no need at that spot to look for a changing tide, the current continued in one direction, and the fellow ten feet below, like the fellows in the boat, would be hungry in time. He had evidently fed before our arrival. As I sat and watched for a movement on the part of this animal, of which I had a hope, but little prospect, of capturing, I wondered at the theory of those men who advise exercise after a meal; and I saw how an octopus, an animal closely related to an oyster, only it has no attachment to real estate and is destitute of a shell, took its siesta after dinner just as my boy Joe; the cows in the pastures and our dogs and cats do after they have had a full feed, and I saw that Nature rebelled against labor on a full stomach. The man who eats a heavy dinner at midday and then goes to work does what a dorky boy, a dog, cat or an octopus would not do. That was the nature of my pipe dream as we lay there in the Gulf Stream with a sleepy dorky boy in the boat, a sleepy octopus below and a drowsy white man on watch.

The sun had, as usual, attended to business and gone into the west; and finally Joe aroused enough

to ask: "S'pose he don't come out for a week, isn't you goin' ashore to sleep an' to get some grub?"

"Joe," said I, "sleep and grub we must have, but I must also have that octopus. I'll stay right here until I get that fellow, or until he escapes. If we get short of provisions you can swim ashore, it's only about a mile, and have them sent. You had better go now and bring out more provisions and some blankets in another boat."

Our boat was a light flat-bottomed scow with high sides, and dry enough to sleep in; but the very heavy dews of the nights rendered it unsafe to sleep out without cover of some sort, although it was warm. The moon was nearly full, and Joe could be seen almost half way to the shore by his wake in the moonlight as he swam off, the land being about half a mile away. A pair of thin bed-tick trousers and a shirt which was not buttoned at the neck was his entire costume, except a straw hat, which he left behind. As the day faded the glory of the moon took its place, the breeze died out, and Harrington Sound was still and unruffled. Even by moonlight one could get an idea of the wealth of color on the bottom in the marvelously clear waters of the Gulf Stream, about an island which had no streams to carry soil into the waters about it. Yet there was that dreamy haziness which gives moonlight its peculiar charm, and involuntarily the dream of Clarence in "Richard III.," came up:

"Methought I saw * * *

Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable stones, unvalu'd jewels,
All scattered in the bottom of the sea.
Some lay in dead men's skulls ; and, in those holes
Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept
(As 'twere in scorn of eyes) reflecting gems,
That woo'd the slimy bottom of the deep,
And mock'd the dead bones that lay scatter'd by."

The perfect silence, the solitude and the moonlight, were provocative of weird thoughts, and the time seemed long until the sound of oars told that Joe was coming with the supplies. He had not hurried, he had not been asked to hurry, and no doubt he had told all the fishermen who lived near him what I had resolved to do, and had listened to their comments on either my prospect of success or my sanity. He rowed alongside, transferred his stores, tied the boat to drift in our rear, ate a supplementary supper and then we rolled up in our blankets.

An octopus has large eyes, and, while classed with the mollusks (soft bodies without skeletons) which have no shells, it has not only a power of motion far beyond that of some fishes, an intellect which prompts a movement for self-preservation equal to that of an insect, but also an eyelid, which fishes have not. As I mused over these things, which books had taught me, the question arose: Was this strange animal, which I sought to capture, a night-feeder, or had it breakfasted early in the day and not

being hungry was only a little shy of the presence of our boat? The moon threw no light on the eight-footed creature that lay below. It might be feeding or it might be sleeping, human eyes could not see clearly enough to decide.

Joe slept, and perhaps I may have done the same, but at the first peep of day I was straining my eyes to learn if the octopus was looking for his breakfast. The light was not sufficient to determine this. Joe was snoring, but I took a squirrel-fish from the tank, hooked it below the dorsal fin, put a quarter-ounce sinker a few inches above it, and with rod carefully dropped it down above the den of the "devilfish." It had not breakfasted, for an arm shot out and seized the bait with its suckers. My experience as a trout fisher with the artificial fly naturally impelled me to strike, and I struck. The consequence was that the octopus was scared, for it is not a game fish, and the bait floated away.

The toughness of some conchs which lay in the boat seemed to recommend them as bait for the very tough customer which lay below. A shell was broken and a brother mollusk was hooked on deep in the toughest part, with the idea of holding the bait and dragging the animal from its lair. One tentacle after another enveloped the new bait, and I had just now learned not to "strike." Gently the rod drew the tough bait and the hungry octopus from its refuge into open water, while my left hand raised

the net that lay below. Joe was still asleep; the octopus hung to his prey while I cautiously brought him near the surface, at the same time following with the net, much as we do when crabbing. My heart beat fast. If the creature became alarmed and let go of the bait would it dodge the net and escape? It surely would not hold on if brought above the surface and be landed like an eel on a bob. I had worked the handle of the landing net upward with the thumb and forefinger until my quarry was within a foot of the surface, and the rim of the net was the same distance below the animal. It stopped feeding and released one tentacle. The time for action had come. The net had been made with a deep bag, in order to turn the rim in a way to close the bag and hold the captive, if there should be one to hold.

Dropping the rod overboard, both hands brought up the net with a jerk; but the octopod held on to the rim and did not get to its bottom; the trap failed to work. The commotion awakened Joe, who took in enough of the situation to plunge overboard. As I brought the animal into the air, it struck out in all directions to get free, and with one tentacle on the gunwale of the boat, another on the net handle, and a third slapped on my bare left arm, it resisted capture. The drawing sensation of a dozen or more suckers made a tingling like so many cupping glasses, but a grip on its neck with my right hand

stopped the power of suction, and the tentacles were limp and helpless, and a live octopus was mine.

The whole affair, after the rod was dropped, could not have occupied over half a minute, but it seemed long, and Joe saw part of the fight from the other boat, but did not venture near until the animal was confined safely in a box and the hasp fastened. He then came alongside and recovered the rod, but had no desire to look into the box. Whether an octopus would or could use its parrot-like beak in such a case I do not know. I had been told by Prof. Baird that they were harmless if choked, and faith in what he said enabled me to make this capture. Blood showed under the skin on the arm where the suckers had taken hold, and the native fishermen came from the other side of the island to verify the story by seeing the octopus and the marks on my arm.

Joe grinned when he received the promised reward, and remarked: "A man that lives over on St. George's has got just the boat I want, an' ten dollars 'll buy it, an' he won't take any less. But if I buy the boat, there's nothing left for the circus that's comin' next week, an' I dunno."

"When I pay you for your regular work in two days from now, when the steamer leaves for New York, there'll be enough to go to a good many circuses. Didn't you count that in?"

"No, sir, I gives all I earn to mammy; an' I do

want that boat and to see the circus a couple of times."

He got it, and when the handsome collection was landed in New York the octopus, which, by the way, could spread about three feet, was the prize catch, and drew as much attention as all the angelfish and the other brilliant specimens together. The only loss on the trip was one barracouta and the Mangrove crabs, which live partly in the trees or on the rocks, and why they died is a mystery.

The colored people of Bermuda are a fine lot of men. It is so long since they were slaves, and there is little or no race prejudice in the islands, that they have developed into a respectable and self-respecting class, especially the fishermen, who are more independent than many others. Joe wrote me that if I came to Bermuda again to remember him, and added: "I am not so afraid of the —— now. He may take charge of a stake and a boat when a man is afraid of him, but he didn't take charge of you. I can't forget that. Come here again and get some more. Joe."

It would have been pleasant, but I never did.

CHAPTER XIX.

SOME VIRGINIA MEN AND FISH.

A FEW weeks in the fall of 1875 I was busy at Blacksburg, where I made the acquaintance of Dr. M. G. Ellzey, then a professor in the Military and Agricultural Academy there. We talked of fishing in New River, and planned a trip which never came off. The stream there was not fit for a salmon hatchery, and I took one of his students, Mr. W. F. Page, and went up into Rockbridge County, by advice of Dr. Robertson, of Lynchburg, then a State Fish Commissioner; and the late Col. Marshall McDonald, a professor of mathematics, if memory serves, in the fine State Military Institute at Lexington, had most comfortable quarters assigned us in the State building. Here was the necessary fall to the water, and as soon as the hatchery was planned and under way I left the carpenters to finish the work, with Page to oversee it, and I went off to Richmond to fish with Mr. Alexander Mosely, then editor of the *Richmond Whig*.

At this time politics in Virginia had cooled from a white heat through the different shades known to those who temper steel until it might be said to have

reached the stage of "cherry red," but was still red hot. Mosely, whose particular brand of politics is forgotten—for he only talked of fish to me—said: "I can't fish with you to-morrow, as I promised, as I have important engagements to-night and to-morrow; but come with me and meet an enthusiastic fisherman with whom you can swap lies, and we will fish later. He introduced me to Capt. Jack Yeatman, commanding a packet on the James River and Kanawha Canal, whom I had met in his native town of Lynchburg, but did not know that he was an angler.

Capt. Jack talked of catching "jack," and as this is an old English name for pike, when below a certain weight, I naturally talked of the pike of New York, which grows to a weight of 30 pounds or more, and we got all mixed up.

"Yes, sir," said I, "in the State of New York we get 'jack,' as you call them, which occasionally—not always—weigh 30 pounds. The people there commonly miscall them 'pickerel,' but they are not the true pike of Europe, where a small one is called 'jack.' I have no ambition to pose as a champion fish liar, for there are too many aspirants for the belt, but in the North we have a brother to the pike which we call a mascalonge, with more or less variety in spelling and pronunciation, which has been known to reach a weight of 80 pounds."

Capt. Yeatman's eyes ran up and down my 5 feet

6 inches, looked me in the eyes, and said: "Let's have another lemonade."

Just then Mr. Mosely and friend dropped in, and after a general talk on fish, and pike in particular, Mosely said: "Our Yankee friend is right, Capt. Jack. This little fish in our Virginia waters, which was named for you, centuries before you were born, is only one of a family which has members that exceed ours in weight as much as Barnum's fat woman exceeds the avoirdupois of the average Virginia dame. Is that a correct statement, Yank?"

"Yes, the statement is correct, but you must take into consideration that the species are different. We have your species and two larger kinds, as well as the little brook pike, which seldom exceeds eight inches, and abounds in most streams on the Atlantic coast from Cape Cod to Florida. The great lake pike and the mascalonge have been often taken of 30 pounds weight, but the large ones are not as common now as they were fifty years ago. Your jack is called pick-erel in the North, but there they misapply that name to the pike also. But what I tell you about the weights of these fish is true."

"That reminds me," said Capt. Jack, "that last year I had a passenger who said that they took a jack in a net at Point Pleasant, where the Kanawha comes into the Ohio, that weighed 16 pounds, and I know that there are no jack in the Kanawha, for I've fished it from Dublin, on New River, to Point

Pleasant. I told him that there are no jack west of the Alleghanies, for I've fished the Big Sandy and all the principal rivers on that side. But, if he was correct, it must have been one of your big Northern fish that had somehow strayed from the fold."

Mr. Mosely asked if this could be possible, and I told him that one of the big pikes was occasionally taken in waters in the Ohio Valley. At that time I did not know of which species, but have since learned that it is an unspotted mascalonge.

By invitation of Mr. Mosely, Capt. Yeatman would fish with us, and early on the second morning we hired three darkies with boats to take us down to where Butler's Dutch Gap Canal and the James River met. "Here," said Mr. Mosely, "we will try for chub and jack. If you catch any you may call them black bass and pickerel, but we'll stick to the old Virginia names for a while, until the spread of angling literature has its effect on a younger generation."

We fished, lunched and fished until it was time for the darkies to resume the oars and row up stream. They had partly drifted down and had slept, or pretended to sleep, all day, and now they were to earn their money. They kept the boats alongside so that we could talk on the way up the canal, and Capt. Yeatman was disposed to get my views on the strategic value of the canal which Gen. Butler cut in order to leave Richmond, an inland city, a few miles

back from the river, but which is now used by boats to cut off miles of travel to the State capital.

Said I: "Capt. Jack, in cutting this canal Gen. Butler did not hurt the Confederacy a little bit, but he saved many catfish, then unhatched, many miles of laborious swim, and if they had speech they, or their descendants, would rise up and call him blessed."

We had a good catch of black bass, something like a dozen pickerel and some perch and other fishes. Mr. Mosely had absorbed enough of modern ichthyology to distinguish the two black basses. I say modern ichthyology because it was shortly after the time when Dr. Gill had brought order out of chaos and condensed the many nominal species into two; and I can never forgive Mr. Mosely for writing to *Forest and Stream* that the big-mouth was a "vulgarian." The word was new to me and to others, but it "took," and that slanderous remark rests on a good game fish to-day. Dr. Henshall and I have fought this prejudice, but it seems to be fated to remain, and it probably will remain as long as one species of black bass appears on the statute books of New York as "Oswego bass."

Mr. Alexander Mosely was a bachelor, and slept above his editorial rooms, where I saw his collection of rods and pipes, but he had a dinner fit for anglers prepared for us at a café and shortly afterward sent me a rare collection of pipes from the roots of Vir-

ginia laurel, or rhododendron, and of "bamboo," which I think is known as "cat brier" in New York, and the bundle of stems included "seven-barks" and other woods which are supposed to impart more or less flavor, or coolness, to "the weed of Ole Virginny."

From Lynchburg up to Lexington was a bit of most delightful travel. It was "slack-water navigation," which meant that the river was dammed and used as a canal. We slept peacefully at night, after leaving Lynchburg, if the boat did not bump too heavily in the locks, but in the morning there was some three hours on deck, after breakfast, winding among the mountains, the musical horn blowing for the locks and the mist which partly concealed and partly revealed the next turn in the river and brought startled water fowl suddenly in view. * * * But there is a railroad there to-day. Will there be any pleasure in travel, for travel's sake, in the next century?

Dr. Robertson, of Lynchburg, was the head of the State Fish Commission then, and I had to run down from Lexington to consult with him about the stream where the quinnat salmon fry should be planted, for this was my order from Prof. Baird. Dr. Robertson was a bachelor who had not the slightest element of humor in his make-up. He was a most excellent man, but to me he was, as the diplomats say, "*persona non grata*," and my frequent

visits to Lynchburg ended in Capt. Jack Yeatman's office, if he was in town, for there was cheerfulness and sunshine. One day the Captain showed me a rod of his own make which was at least original. It was a whole cane, except the extreme top, and just above the upper reel-band he had tunneled into it and then burned out the partitions which occur at the joints, and had put a ferrule on the tip to keep it from splitting.

"There," said he, "is a rod that will have an even strain along its whole length, and not on outside rings where the line makes the chord of an arc when the rod bends. Now, I've tied the line to the stove-leg. Take hold of the rod, and note the spring of it." Then he ran the line through the cane.

I tried, walked back and felt the line go through the rod, and remarked: "That's an excellent rod for one thing."

"What's that?"

"For encouraging the trade in fishing lines. Did you ever use it?"

"No, only finished it a few days ago. I don't know that I understand you exactly."

"I thought you hadn't used it. Take hold of it, and put a strain on the rod, and walk backward and feel the line run through."

He did this, and said: "I thought I had it smooth inside, but it isn't."

"No, and I doubt if it can be made smooth. See

here," and I picked some fine particles that came from the rod off the floor and showed him more in the line, which was a good cable-laid linen one which was entitled to better treatment; "if the inside of the cane was of enamel, like the outside," I added, "the line would run smoothly, but would probably wear¹ more than it does in rings or in standing guides, especially if the latter were agate lined."

He thought a moment before he said: "I wonder if a little thin varnish poured through wouldn't keep the soft fibre close? Probably not. Well, that's not the first original idea that flattened out, but I don't know but it might be done with some close-grained wood, like greenheart or lancewood. I'll think this over." *

During the building of the hatchery and the troughs and trays I had quite a picnic either with the cadets in the Military Institute at Lexington, or swapping yarns with Capt. Yeatman. At the Institute there was much of interest beside the drills and dress parades. Here Stonewall Jackson had been professor of physics and artillery instructor, after his service in the Mexican War, and Col. Marshall McDonald, Jackson's chief of engineers, was then an instructor and was afterward United States Fish Commissioner. He was my pupil in fish-culture.

* I don't know whether Capt. Yeatman followed this up or not; it was a pet idea with him because it was his own. The tubular rod was made in steel some dozen years ago, but was abandoned, the friction being too great.

He seemed entirely devoid of humor; but when all was ready and the great, handsome eggs of the quinnat salmon came, a full quarter of an inch in diameter, and highly colored, McDonald watched the opening of the cases, the thermometer tests, and the final deposit in the troughs. Then, gathering a handful and putting them in a newspaper, he said to me: "Come along."

He passed "Old Specs" without remark, but we went into "Old Gimlet's room," where that individual was in conversation with ex-Gov. Letcher, the old "war governor." The cadets at Virginia's great military academy are not more respectful than boys in the rest of the world, and Gen. Smith, the superintendent, wore glasses, and hence was "Old Specs." For some reason, now forgotten, every surgeon at the post, for years back, was "Old Gimlet." I had become well acquainted with the Governor, had taken lemonade, mint tea and peach and honey at his house, but I had no idea what McDonald was up to until he said: "Doctor, try this new kind of currant we've been raising. Governor, have some."

The Doctor and the Governor both took them in their hands. They were large, cool and looked inviting. As the Doctor put his in his mouth Gov. Letcher must have seen something in my eye, for he paused long enough to see the effect on the Doctor, and to hear his remarks. The Governor passed.

Those disrespectful cadets! They would come

into my room, sometimes a dozen, and say: "Old Yank" (I was then forty-two), "we have just dropped in to have a sociable smoke with you and listen to your chirp. Ah, thank you; your tobacco is always good." Or a single one would drop in and remark: "Gen. Yank, you flatter yourself that you can play a fair game of chess, and I thought I'd drop in and knock that conceit out of you."

Sometimes the cadet went off a victor, but it was not a grand victory, because the game is the only one I love. I am only a duffer at it. But I loved many of those boys and thought how eagerly their predecessors of a little over a dozen years before had sprung to serve their State, and were cut down at New Market, if that is the place where some of the finest of Virginia's youth fell. The boys all knew that I had fought on the other side. I would despise myself to conceal that anywhere, and they seemed pleased to learn that I did not object to being called "Yank"; and so we got on in good shape, and if there was a little fight to be settled with fists under the hill, "man fashion," I always got notice in time to be there. The authorities winked at it, if they heard of it, for most men agree that this is the best way for boys to settle all grievances. If the trouble was between boys where the disparity in size forbade a settlement in this way, the smaller could readily find a knight to take his place who had the requisite *avoirduois* to make the contest an equal thing at the

start. This is the rule at West Point and in the German academies. I believe in fighting, and enjoyed the "scraps" under the hill. War is the natural state of man, as all history, Biblical and other, shows; and a boy who is a coward has no standing among boys, no matter how he may stand in his classes. Malthus said that a war was a necessity every thirty years, in order to kill off the surplus males and so keep the world from over-population and pestilence and plague. I agree with him, although I have considered the opposite theory that war carries off the strong men, while famine and pestilence take only the weak. But the fact remains that immigration from over-populated Europe has built cities, States and Territories in America, where the wolf should howl and the buffalo should range on land that should be left for our children's children for the next ten thousand years!

This is entirely in line with the policy of *Forest and Stream* in the preservation of game for men yet to be born. We may use what Nature offers us, but it is ours in trust. We may not destroy in order to increase personal gains, but we should ever remember that our sons will come after. These are the thoughts which a recollection of the cadets' fistic battles under the hill have brought up. It is natural to fight. Boys love to snowball and to storm a snow fort, and the play of all young animals is a mimic combat. When the Peace Society succeeds in

changing the whole nature of man, war will cease, and the great nations will not descend on helpless China and divide her, as they are doing to-day, because she has neither an army nor a navy worth mentioning.

Capt. Yeatman one day said to me: "You seem to pay a great deal of attention to the darkies that go along the street, and just now you left your chair to watch one go by on the other side of the street. What interests you so in them?"

"I see more quaint character than—no, not than you do, but, to put it correctly, I am more impressed with it than you are, who have been brought up among it. The darkies of the North have not the careless abandon and ragged picturesqueness that they have here, and it is a treat to me to see them. Before I came South I thought the old-time minstrels exaggerated the negro, but that long, lanky man who just passed would have been a model for Dave Reed or Nelse Seymour."

"Who was Dave Reed—an artist?"

"Yes, artist enough to draw \$100 per night from Bryant's Minstrels, in New York, for a ten-minute act—singing:

" 'Sally come up,
Sally come down,
Sally come twist yo' heel aroun'.
De ole man, he's gone to town;
O, Sally, come down de middle.'"

Not much in the way of poetry, nor music, but there was much in Reed's long legs and the way he did that chorus. The darky who just passed had Reed's trick of dropping his hip that others tried, and as I watched him go up the street just now I could imagine that he was doing the 'Sally, come up' act."

"I see; you like that sort of thing. I wondered what you copied that darky's motions for."

"Well, if I did follow them it was involuntary, and perhaps I was doing the act mentally. By the way, there was a man from somewhere in Virginia who invented the banjo, or at least put the thumb-string on it, and he came to my native town with a circus and played and sang in the ring, and he taught me to play a little, for I was wild over it and sought him out. He had a song about Lynchburg. The chorus stated that he was 'gwine down to Lynchburg town, to tote my 'bacca down dar.' One verse went:

" 'De ole Jeems Ribber I float down,
I run my 'bacca boat agroun';
De drif' log cum wid a rush an' a din
An' stove bofe ends of my ole boat in.
But it'll neber do to gib it up so,' etc.

He came to Albany for three years, and I was with him every minute that he allowed me. That was about 1846-48, when I was thirteen to fifteen years old. His name was Jo Sweeny."

"Well, well!" said Capt. Jack, "so you knew old Jo Sweeny! He was a native of Virginia, about Appomattox, and he and his brother Richard both died in 1860. There was another brother—and they were all banjoists—who was somehow connected with Gen. J. E. B. Stuart; but whether as an entertainer or a staff officer I don't know."

This explained why a letter to Jo Sweeny, in care of Gen. Jubal A. Early, C. S. A., was not answered; as a prisoner taken at Spottsylvania who stopped to listen to the banjo of Color Sergt. George Drysdale, of my regiment, expressed himself to the effect that if he wanted to hear real banjo playing he should hear Sweeny, etc.; and by the time Drysdale told it to me there was a change in the personnel. Gen. Stuart was killed in 1864, about the time I heard that Sweeny was with him, and it is not to be wondered at that my letters from Confederate prisoners, some two months later, were not answered.

"Capt. Jack," said I, "one of the grandest musical treats of my life was at a corn-husking near Burkville, Va., in the fall of 1865. Most men have a taste for music of some kind, and as a sort of retaliation for your observation on my watching Southern darkies I will tell you that I have heard you humming, or whistling, 'My Old Kentucky Home' and 'Way Down on de Swanee Ribber,' and therefore know that you are possessed of both melody and rhythm, which comprises all there is of music to my

ear. The harmony of an operatic chorus is wasted on me."

The Captain thought a moment, and replied: "You are fond of the songs of birds; they sing without rhythm."

"Perhaps so, but with melody."

"Ever hear a catfish sing?"

"I've heard the sounds they make when pulled out of the water with a hook in the mouth, if that's what you mean."

"Just so," said the Captain; "we will hear some of them sing in about an hour." And we did, as well as some horned dace which the Captain called roach. I took some of these, and perhaps the fall fish also, at Lexington. I refer to the two species of *Semotilus*, which I could not well distinguish in those days.

My friend, Judge A. K. Leake, of Licking, Va., told me this story: "Upon my father's plantation, in the long bygone days, was an old superannuated negro whom we called 'Uncle Phil Hatcher,' to distinguish him from another Phil on the place. Old Uncle Phil's working days were over; he had 'laid down de shubble an' de hoe,' and was allowed to pass his declining days in any manner that pleased him, which was in fishing if the weather was right; but on cold, rainy days when he had 'roomatics in his laigs an' de misery pains in his back,' he was to be found close by the stove in an outhouse which was

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used as a kitchen for the 'hands,' in which his sister, old Aunt Milly, reigned supreme as the cook.

"He had a genius for fishing that probably was born with him, and the scenes of his exploits were a large creek and a mill pond, both on the plantation, and at the mouth of the creek where it empties into the James River. In my early boyhood the holidays were doubly welcome if the weather permitted Uncle Phil to fish, and I could accompany him. He was remarkably successful, and it seemed as if the fish refrained from taking others' hooks in order to sample Uncle Phil's bait. It made no difference if he baited my hooks; he would catch a dozen to my one, and big ones at that. His tackle consisted of a strong cotton line, spun and twisted on the place; an ordinary sized hook, a float made by him out of the soft root of the ash, and a cedar rod cut and peeled when the sap was running up.

"The fish he would catch—using our local nomenclature—were Southern chub (black bass), pike, silver perch, carp and flatback. The two last named would bite from February to April and from October to January. I have never seen these fish elsewhere than in the waters of the Piedmont section of Virginia, and do not know their scientific names. Both have the small, round, sucker mouth, and in cold weather are very good eating. The carp is a rather flat fish, with large fins, a sharp back and large silvery scales. The flatback is a round fish

with small dark scales on the back and sides. You will recognize the other kinds. There were other fish in these streams, sun and yellow perch, mullet, white chub, catfish, etc., but the fish just named were the only ones that Uncle Phil deemed worthy of his steel, and he looked with undisguised contempt on the silk lines and painted corks which I had. He lived and died in blissful ignorance, no doubt, of such an art as fly-fishing.

"His invariable bait for carp and flatback was cornmeal dough, mixed with cotton, and put on the hook in shape of a ball as large as a buckshot, while for the other fish he used live minnows. He lived to a great old age, delighted in a 'chaw' of tobacco, and there is no record of his ever refusing a drink of whisky. If he ever did such a thing, it must have been many long years before my advent.

"Apropos of his taste for 'nutritious beverages,' on one occasion when we were fishing near an old mill of my grandfather's he pointed out the site of an old distillery where, he said, my grandfather made excellent whisky, apple and peach brandy, and he could, in those good old days, get a drink as often as he wanted one.

" 'Dey was de good ole times,' said Uncle Phil; 'dey don' nebber come no mo'; it was worf while fo' to lib in dem days, 'deed it was, an' yo' gran'fader—well, dey don' seem to make men like him now'days; an' he made good whisky too—not such stuff as dey

makes now. Hole on, I got a bite—nuffin' but a little sun perch, an' no 'count. But yo' gran'fader get along fust rate tell bimeby ole Gen'l Coke he cum 'long. Ole Gen'l Coke he one dem temp'rance men, an' he talk an' talk till yo' gran'fader actilly jine de temp'rance. He was a-gitten along in years, an' I 'spects his mine was a little 'sturbed, an' he nebber do a t'ing like dat. But ole mahstah he jine, an' he nebber had any mo' health; he jes' pine away an' die'."

Judge Leake and I had been fighting our battles over again in that fraternal spirit which the true American soldier knows when he meets a fair, manly opponent, and I remarked: "My dear Colonel" (he has forbidden me to address him by the military title which he should be entitled to as an ordnance officer in A. P. Hill's Corps, Army of Northern Virginia, and so I will say no more on that subject)—"my dear Colonel," I replied, "what you say reminds me of two stories, and they run in this way. A Northern traveler in Kentucky asked a ducky: 'Whose large house is that?'

" 'Keyurnal Johnson's, sah.'

" 'Do you happen to know with what corps Col. Johnson served during the war?'

" 'No, sah; the Keyurnal didn't git into de wah; he was too young. He was bawnd a Keyurnal, sah!'

" 'Judge,' said I, "that story represents the North-

ern idea of the Southern gentleman. At thirty he is a captain (there is no lower grade); at forty he is a major; at fifty a colonel; and then he is a general, ten years later—that is, if he is a man of prominence in his community. In the North the tendency was to drop them after the war, unless a man was a real, sure-enough general; but as the war veterans get older there is a disposition to revive military titles. But I'll tell you a story:

“What your old ducky, ‘Uncle Phil,’ said about your grandfather ‘j’inin’ de temp’rance’ recalls a story of a New Yorker who visited a Virginia gentleman, and seeing mint growing in profusion, proceeded to make his host acquainted with the flavor of a mint julep. Many pleasant days passed, and the traveler went his way; but a few years after he found himself near the old plantation, and inquired for the proprietor. An old ducky came to the door and said: ‘De young Maas’ Brown he dun’ gone off awn a deer hunt, an’ de ole maas’ he gone daid.’

“‘Dead! Sorry to hear that. What did he die of?’

“‘He was livin’ ’long fust rate till a Yankee cum’ down yeah an’ teach him to drink grass in hees rum, an’ he died; I ’spect dat’ll kill anybody, sah.’”

CHAPTER XX.

COOKING A TROUT IN CAMP.

FOR the last half mile the trail led through a piece of low, marshy ground rank with the luxuriant vegetation of July. The level ground was a relief to feet that had supported not only the bodies rightfully belonging to them, but packs of fifty pounds, more or less, and had climbed hills and stepped over fallen logs for nearly four miles. In this piece of "bottom" there was no sign of the presence of a lake, but the wooded hills on every side plainly said that if there was water in the neighborhood it must be near. The two guides were leading the column, each with the boat resting on the neck-yoke on his shoulders, while the Colonel and the Doctor, each with a pack of provisions; Jack, the Colonel's son of sixteen, with camp kettles and axe, and I, with the tent, brought up the rear. Tired and hungry, no one beside the Doctor noticed the profusion of the curious flower of the pitcher plant which thrust its single stalk crowned with a large purple blossom above the grass, while the modest pitchers were invisible. The Doctor gathered several of the flowers, no doubt with the evil intent of inflicting a botanical lecture upon us at the first opportunity, remarking at the

time that we must be near the lake. He had scarcely spoken when Lake Merganser opened into view as we passed a clump of bushes. We left the marsh and turned up the lake a short distance to get on more solid ground, and beside a big rock the boats were launched and we rowed along the shore, looking out for the little spring that came down the hill, in order to camp by it.

The sun was not over two hours high when we reached the camping place, and it was necessary to utilize every moment in order to prepare for night and get supper for five hungry men and a ravenous boy. Tired as we were, the Doctor insisted on having fresh lake trout for supper, and getting out his tackle, stepped into a boat and soon had his heavily-leaded trolling spoon in the depths of the lake where the large lakers love to lie in the cooler waters. The guides went to cut and split dry wood for the night, the Colonel gathered twigs and branches for a temporary fire, I had pitched the tent, and Jack was bringing balsam boughs which I carefully stripped of large stems and laid in lapping rows until a soft, springy bed, redolent of the most delightful odor that ever beguiled tired woodsman to slumber, was completed. The declining sun lit the tree-tops on the hills, and the clouds hung lazily over the water as if to see themselves in that mountain-framed mirror; or, possibly, they knew the lake was the result of their weeping, and now with cheerful faces they

loved to hover over it. The Doctor, in his eagerness to get out his fishing tackle, had stepped upon and ruined his pitcher-plants, and we were thereby saved a lecture on the family *Saracenia*, for which Jack audibly expressed the thanks which the rest of the party felt.

A noisy kingfisher flew up and wound up his reel on a limb, disappointed at the result of its last dive, and a shout from the Doctor proclaimed that he had a strike. After a long, quiet reeling-in, the fish made a fair struggle for freedom which bent the short, stout rod and caused the Doctor some anxiety lest the line should pass under the boat and get fouled or be sawed off. Nothing of the kind happened, and in a few minutes more a splendid five-pounder was laid before us. The kingfisher also saw it, and chirred his disapprobation of the invasion of his domain and the capture of a fish greater than he could master. "Now," said the Doctor, exultingly, "we'll have the fish for supper and save the ham and canned goods for some other time, perhaps when we can't do better." He looked around defiantly, as if challenging opposition, his face still suffused with a flush of victory; but finding none he subsided, and his smile lit up the cedars and the rocky shores of the island and was reflected by the white birch at the landing, and then audibly picked up in a weird manner by a solitary loon whose "ha-ha!" as he dove startled the kingfisher into again

winding up his reel as though he had struck a yearling trout. A few minutes later the Colonel and the Doctor sat on a log by the open front of the tent and argued how a trout should be cooked. "I tell you," said the Colonel, "a trout to be cooked to perfection should never be dressed at all. Just roll it up in wet clay, about an inch thick all around, and lay it in a bed of hot ashes and cover it up with live coals, and let it bake. A trout the size of this one wants from a half to three-quarters of an hour, and when the clay comes off the skin comes off with it and the inside arrangements are shriveled up to nothing. The fish is cooked in its own juices, and is not dried up." And he smacked his lips at the thought. But I had some doubt about the Colonel's experience in this matter, and suspected that all he knew of it he had read somewhere among the camp stories of theoretical campers, for he was not as much of a woodsman as he flattered himself to be, and in this he bore a most striking likeness to most of us who do a little camping.

About cooking a trout, however, the Doctor had his own ideas, and while the Colonel was delivering his lecture on camp cookery, had split the fish down the back. Then, laying his pipe on the log, looked up and said: "Colonel, this is my trout, and I am going to cook it in my way, and when you eat it you will say it is the best fish you ever put a tooth in. It will wrap 'round your heart like a yard of new flan-

nel." He then ran a twig through the gills, put a splint across the halves to keep it spread open, laid a strip of bacon over the head, and set the twig in two crotches before the fire, so that the fish hung with the flesh side to the coals and the dripping bacon would keep it moist.

"Don't you salt it before it is cooked?" asked the Colonel.

"No; it is best to salt it afterward."

"I like to have salt cooked into a fish."

"Yes," chimed in Jack, "both salt and pepper should be cooked into the fish and not sprinkled over afterward. If you want to serve that trout to the queen's taste just salt and pepper it while it is broiling."

"Well," replied the Doctor, "when you go out and catch a trout and bring it to the camp, you may cook it as you please, and if it is good I will say so, but I am the old trout cook himself, and you will all say so after you eat this one. I tell you the bacon salts it some and salt on a raw fish hinders it from cooking through properly. Now among the old Romans——"

"Hang the old Romans!" said Jack. "How do you know whether they ever slept out over night or not, and a man who never did knows nothing of camp cookery. What did a Roman cook know of Lake Merganser and a trout cooked over birch twigs? Not more than a French *chef*."

They appealed to me, and I intimated that if there was plenty of it and it was ready that moment I could eat it with salt, ashes or sand, either on the outside or on the backbone. I spread a blanket on the boughs and stretched full length on it. The sun was nearly down, and a wood-thrush poured forth its short, sweet notes in the thicket, the crickets chirped below the bed of balsams, and the bacon sizzled. The Doctor and Jack went for some light-wood to make a cheerful fire, and the Colonel fussed around, muttering something about salt, and then went to the spring for water. Jack came in, threw down his wood, and asked if there was any pepper in camp. I told him there was, and he went hunting for it. Presently the other two came in, and after a glance at the fish the Doctor pronounced it done, took it from the fire, opened the salt-box and sprinkled the fish lightly, saying: "You'll say that this beats the world."

"What have you been doing with the salt-box?" asked the Colonel.

"Salting the fish, to be sure," was the reply.

"I salted it while you went for wood," said the Colonel, "and put on plenty, too."

"So did I," said Jack; "I salted it and peppered it well. Guess we've got it salt enough."

"Well," sighed the Doctor, "you've got it to eat, or no supper. There is one good thing—the spring is handy; but the next time I cook a trout I want

you to let it alone." An early-rising owl asked "Who, who?" and the Doctor looked up but answered not. The last rays of the fast-declining sun illumined the clouds until their tints rivaled the Doctor's face. His good nature got the better of his disappointment, and he said: "Maybe it won't be so bad, after all."

We sat around the fire with huge chips in hand for plates and anxiously watched, as only hungry campers could, the slow process of dividing the fish. I tasted and rested. The Colonel tasted and looked at me. We in turn looked at Jack, who had a large piece on his fork which his open mouth would soon engulf. He bit it, jumped and ran to the spring.

By this time the Doctor was ready to sample his. One taste, and he knocked the bread into the fire as he rose, saying: "I expected any quantity of salt, but——" Here a coughing-fit seized him and he stopped.

"Jack," called the Colonel, "what did you put on his fish?"

"Nothing but salt and pepper," answered he.

"Where did you get the pepper?"

"Out of the brown paper by your tackle-box."

"Good grief! The Scotch snuff I brought up to give Uncle Ben to kill fleas on his dog!"

The pink rays of the dying sun set the kingfisher out in bold relief as he chattered furiously, and a loon on the opposite shore laughed a scornful, jeer-

ing laugh. An audible silence hung like a pall over the camp for half a minute. "If there was a gun in camp I'd kill that loon in the morning," remarked the Doctor, and each sat awhile wrapt in thought, contemplating the beauties of Nature.



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